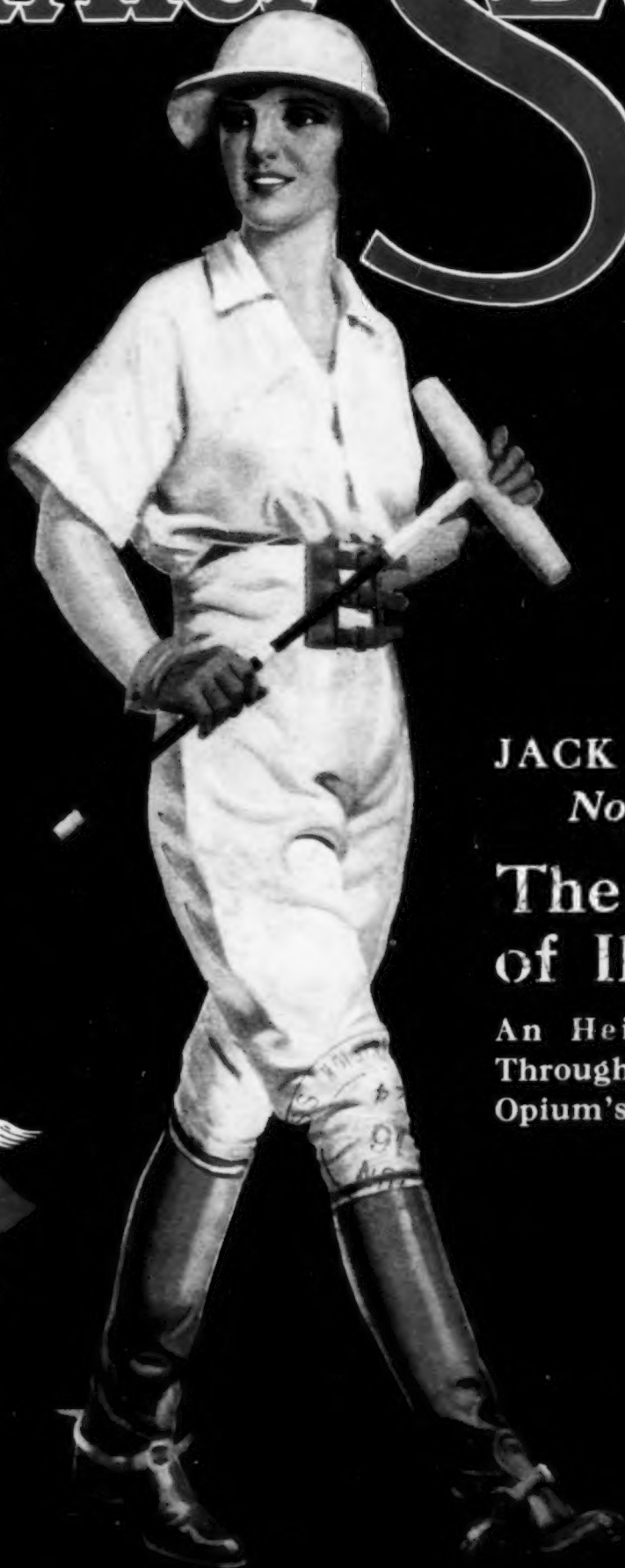


JULY, 1924

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SMART SET



JACK BOYLE'S
Novelette:

The Valley of Illusion

An Heiress Saved
Through Love from
Opium's Half-World



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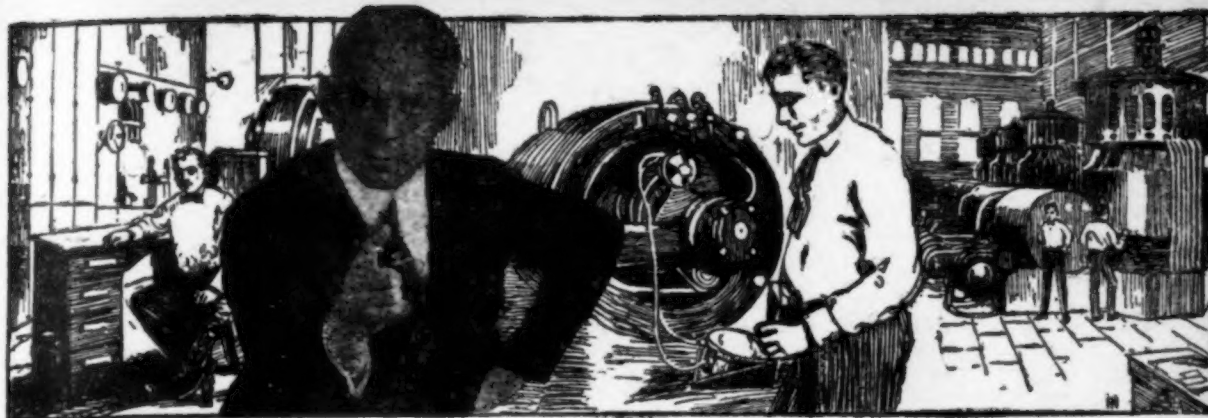
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SMART SET

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VOL. 74

JULY 1924

No. 3

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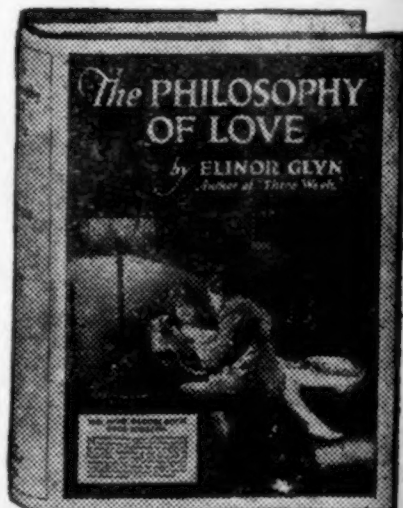
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In the next (AUGUST)

Smart Set

❧

The *Eternal Huntress* is a vivid picture of modern women by one of themselves. "Pandoras," Miss Seelig calls them, "whose curiosity has led them to fling open the forbidden chest of the knowledge of good and evil. They have turned out much that is terrible upon the world and upon themselves, but they have found *hope*. Hope of a saner, stronger race, of a decency no longer based upon ignorance . . ."

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The *Eternal Huntress* is Miss Seelig's first novel—and it is the first novel SMART SET has ever serialized. Its scene is a glittering New York—a New York of riches—the underworld—studios—bucket shops—dazzling streets.

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Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

By Walter S. Dean

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An answer to an ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, if it has not come already, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" nor a financial formula. It is not a political panacea. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—human happiness, especially in the later years of life. And there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of the practical where values must be proved. It "works." And because it does work—most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from disappointment and misery. Millions will rejoice because of it in years to come.

The peculiar value of this discovery is in its virtue for lifting the physical handicaps resulting from the premature waning of the vital forces of life, whether due to overwork, over-worry, sickness or the general over-expenditure of nervous energy in the strenuous living typical of the modern day. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient, "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, vibrant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization, with its wear and tear, rapidly depletes recuperative capacity, and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime.



But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet, in the world's most melodious epic of pessimism, voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of summer too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verse, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search, without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth"—the means for renewing energy and extending the summer time of life.

Now, after many years of research, joyful reports from thousands show that lives clouded by the haze of too-early autumn have been illumined by the summer sun of health and joy; old age, in a sense being kept at bay, and the physical and mental vigor of former years again enjoyed in work and recreation. And the discovery which so adds to the joy of living is easily available to every one who feels the need of greater energy and vitality.

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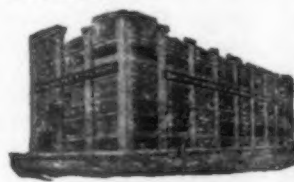
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Vol. 74, No. 3

July 1924

SMART SET



Thoughts During Osculation

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

THE moon poured white gold upon the gliding waves; the whispering water purred as it sped up the sand toward the couple who sat in silence, just out of its reach.

She was young and slender as a nymph; her hair was a golden halo in the moonlight; her eyes were languorous, caressing; her mouth was daintily lip-rouged. Burton had met her during the afternoon; they had danced a bit this evening, then strolled to watch the surf break upon the sand.

A sea breeze whispered confidences, toyed with her shingled hair, laughed at his slight mustache. Her hand, white, warm, soft, smoothed the sand. In the moonlight, it looked like pink-tipped ivory.

Burton touched her hand experimentally; it lay passively within his, then their fingers clung; her face turned a tiny bit toward him. Her sweet, petulant mouth was very close. A thoughtful pause followed. . . .

Slowly he leaned toward her, his heartbeats drowning the sound of the surf in his ears. Her chin tilted upward a trifle. She closed her eyes. He bent forward. Tenderly, then ecstatically, their lips met . . . and clung.

As they kissed, she was thinking, "I just know that good-looking life-saver who smiled at me this afternoon is a college man! I'm going to vamp him tomorrow!"

As they kissed, he was thinking, "If that saucy little blonde waitress at the hotel smiles at me during breakfast, I'm going to ask her out tomorrow night!"



*WHERE the black smoke of opium coils like a steel cable round the souls and bodies of its victims — in the desperate half-world of vice and violence —
—Sheila, heiress to the Raymer millions, is caught in the Valley of Illusion*

The Valley

By Jack Boyle

CHAPTER I

1

LOOKING down upon the city and the bay from the crest of San Francisco's Russian Hill, are a scant half dozen of those massive, old-

fashioned homes which by an unmistakable superiority of atmosphere, impart a vivid impression of conscious, unimpeachable aristocracy. Through a rear door of such a residence a girl, veiled and cloaked, let herself out into a night of dripping sea fog. There was a hint of trepidation, a suggestion of

*A Masterful Novelette
complete in this issue*



o f I l l u s i o n

But even the grim lives of thugs, unhappy girls, drug-addicts and the other furtive hangers-on of the Barbary Coast, have their moments of passionate beauty—of courage—and of triumph. So it was with Sheila and the man she loved. . . . Jack Boyle's masterful novelette is complete in this issue.

furtiveness about her as she peered through the clinging, blanket-like mist for the automobile she expected. It was there, a dim blur in the fog, waiting without lights.

The man behind the wheel threw open the door. The girl seated herself beside but not close to him and the car slipped silently away into the night.

There had been no word of greeting

between the two, no quick handclasp, no eager meeting of eyes in a stolen glance fervid with love or comradeship, either good or evil. Rather they seemed—and were—a girl and a man incongruously thrown together by Fate and ignorance and human frailty. Even one prone to think only evil of humanity would have known beyond question, as they sat together in the car, that the two were not, never had been and never could be anything to each other.

"Where tonight?" the man inquired.

"Take me to the Oriental Garden and then—you know, as usual." A faint sign of inner distress underlay the final words.

The man smiled—a smile meant only for himself and which reflected knowledge subtly sinister. His sallow, waxy skin was the unhealthy pallor of something slowly stagnating to death for a chosen lack of sunlight, and his deep-sunken eyes had in them the chilling iciness of one who has forgotten—or never known—that life may be a thing of ideals and spirituality and love.

As the car glided down the long blocks from the conventional austerity of Russian Hill into the down-town domain of bright lights and even brighter complexions, the face of the girl was a problem for a Freud. Youth and beauty and purity were in it—all obvious. But with these was an intangibly contaminating something that marred—something impossible to name and difficult to read with truth. It seemed, as the street lights revealed her face even beneath its veil, a misplaced and ugly something that seethed inwardly, flaunting itself and its power to force abject obedience notwithstanding and even because of its hatefulness to her.

Together the two—the man who would never know ideals and the girl who was losing them—drove to the Oriental Garden.

2

SHEILA RAYMER was the orphaned heiress of the very many Raymer millions, a girl who by the environment of

birth and education could never have been expected to come within handgrips of the basic, elemental emotions and mysteries of life; but as she raised her veil at the table of the Oriental Garden to which her pallored escort had led her, it was obvious she had, through ignorance or design, violated the restrictions of that environment.

The Oriental Garden, most famous of the Barbary Coast dance halls, was an education and disillusionment. There life revealed itself distortedly in naked sordidness; or, by chance, occasionally in the beauty born of sacrifice. The chauffeur of waxy face and glacial eyes ordered liquor. As the waiter left them the girl looked half-curiously, half-commiseratingly about her with the eyes of youth and purity and unknowledge, inevitably learning.

At the next table was a girl—a girl of exquisitely marcelled hair, blonde and beautiful, but with youthful cheeks a bit too deeply carmined. Opposite her was a man overdressed and hard and sordid of face, with the glint of avarice in his steely eyes. They talked and though no echo of their words reached the table where Sheila Raymer's cocktail stood untouched, instinctively she interpreted what they said.

"How much?" demanded the man.

"Only twenty. His 'poke' was a flivver," from the girl. She opened her purse and passed a single yellow-backed bill across the table. The man took and pocketed it.

"Rotten night. Get busy, and pick a live one," was his brutally unsatisfied command.

"I will," the girl whispered, and for the briefest fraction of a second the flame of sacrifice lighted and haloed her face. For just a second her hand reached toward his with the instinctive impulse of womanhood for a mate beloved. Then, with an inaudible sigh, she rose. The halo dimmed, faded; her face became a thief's mask hard as steel and behind which her soul hid itself. On the dance floor a man over-liquored, leered into her face and lurched toward

her. The girl smiled up at him—with her lips. He caught her, unresisting, in his arms and drew her close as they swung into step to dance music calculatively sensual. Her hand slipped slowly, deftly into the man's breast pocket. In the Bertillon room at police headquarters her photograph was labeled "*Shadow Nell. Pickpocket. Four Convictions.*"

The eyes of the lover to whom her hand had reached out but a moment before in an unrestrainable gesture of girl-love too great to deny anything to its god, followed her approvingly as the stolen wallet vanished within her bodice. His lean fingers felt for and involuntarily fondled the yellow-backed bill she had given him—a bill which, as she passed it across the table had desecrated the halo, pure and serene, that for a second had encircled her face, even in the Oriental Garden with all its brazen hideousness to girls who sold their souls—or themselves—there and passed their earnings to the men they loved. . . .

Sheila Raymer saw herself, if she loved blindly, wholly, passing the wages of thievery across some table in the Oriental Garden to a man. A mist of tears dimmed her eyes, her throat tightened in a gulp of sudden constriction. The youthful chastity of her face grew aged and unutterably weary. The jazz orchestra syncopated blatantly. Sheila's escort sipped his drink.

"Life," cried Sheila Raymer, though her cry was a silent one that echoed only in the deepest recesses of an unawakened heart. "Life is something that no woman may know nor have—unless she pays."

TOWARD midnight the Oriental Garden was filled—not alone with women who, as always there, passed money across tables to men with hard eyes and avaricious fingers, but with women and men whose names were to be found in social directories. Lured by something innate but never confessed the uppermost rung of society and its lowermost,

met there and mingled—the first for pleasure, so-called, the latter for money. While women whose hard eyes mirrored souls killed by men or a man, danced on the main floor in apathetic unresistance with all who asked them, other women looked down upon them from the curtained boxes on the balcony. And these other women came with their escorts in limousines from the sort of homes that seem a universe apart from the lives of those of their sisters who earned their food upon the Garden's dance floor. And yet they came—both men and women of wealth and respectability—and looked down on the Bacchanalia of the Barbary Coast, scarcely realizing, probably, that they were participating, at least mentally, in what they saw.

The entire evening at the Oriental Garden was a calculated preparation for its culmination, a dance given by professional entertainers. It was for this that the slumming parties waited. An hour after midnight the lights in the tinselled dance hall were dimmed; the Babel of shrill voices and clinking glasses was muffled to a lower, more intense key.

A spot-light, brilliant as day, was thrown upon the small stage. Girls, scantily draped, appeared suddenly from what seemed a flower garden and danced—a sinuous, sensuous dance of abandonment. In the very midst of their dance this chorus divided, left and right, and a curtain of jet-black velvet behind them parted revealing a vase-like fountain of purest white.

From this fountain, slowly and with arms outstretched with exquisite grace, a woman rose—the woman Aphrodite whose dance made the Oriental Garden the envy of its rivals.

From head to foot she was clothed in the sheerest of silk with bronze circlets covering her breasts and only a jewelled girdle about her waist. Lightly as a Summer zephyr she stepped down from her marble pedestal and, while the other performers swayed their bodies in rhythmic unison, she danced—a dance of wanton allurement, beau-

tiful in its grace and hideous in its meaning.

In the midst of Aphrodite's appeal to an imagined lover, Sheila Raymer covered her eyes. Her girlhood, without knowing why, instinctively revolted. She dropped her veil hastily and sprang to her feet.

"Come," she cried to her escort with a sobbing catch in her voice. "Take me to Bobby Bien's—quickly, quickly."

3

BOBBY BIEN'S, in the old days of San Francisco, was a dark house on a dark street that wound curvingly up a dark hill. In the sunlight it seemed something asleep—or dead—as were those who frequented it. But with the coming of night it revived, for in darkness it lived. Scores came to its barred doors and tapped. Some came abandonedly; some came with slinking self-accusation; all came furtively but however they came, having come once, they returned again and again and again.

Sheila's escort left the car on a side street and led the girl on foot to Bobby Bien's door. A tap, a muttered signal of identification and it opened. Into the fresh night air there drifted out a whiff of an odor insidiously permeating; sweetish pungent—the odor of opium smoke. The two stepped quickly in; the door was closed and bolted behind them and Sheila Raymer, daughter of millions, was within the lair of the Thing that had throttled her.

CHAPTER II

1

As one suffocating under water swells his lungs to the bursting point as he finds air, so the girl gulped in the heavy, cloying opium smoke that hung, stagnant, in the room. Her hands were tight-clenched; her breast rose and fell in quick, fierce palpitations that were both an agony and the surcease of agony, for with her first twenty inhalations a slowly-spreading consciousness

of peace and well-being began to ease the torture of both body and soul. She sobbed with the last remnant of the will power that once had been hers and tried desperately to deny herself this pain-allaying nepenthe. But as if they were a consciousness apart from and independent of her, Sheila's rebellious lungs greedily filled themselves to their bottom-most depths with the insidiously soothing smoke they craved. As she had done before on a score of nights, the girl threw out her arms, the fingers of her hands wide-spread, in a gesture of abject surrender. In a frenzy of haste she drew a bill from her purse and pressed it into the hand of her chauffeur-escort.

"A hop-toy full. I must have plenty tonight," she faltered. "Tell them to spread the layout quickly."

2

THIRTY days before, Sheila Raymer, secure and at peace in the luxury of her home, had never scented opium nor conceived the possibility that any human being might desire it. Tonight it was the one necessity of her life, though never had she, herself, smoked. So insidious is the seducer of men and women that Sheila, going once to Bobby Bien's merely out of a vivacious curiosity, felt unaccountably impelled to go again. She did go and as on her first visit breathed the opium-laden air while she listened and observed—she thought—as a writer. She went a third time. A night intervened upon which she did not repeat her visit—a frightful night of aching limbs; throbbing temples and insatiable longing. In her ignorance she drew no connection between her physical and mental suffering and her interrupted visits to Bien's. She only knew that for some reason she could not fathom she wanted to go again; only knew that she must go again. . . .

And now, helpless and supine but at peace for a brief and usurious hour, she lay on a Chinese floor mat at Bobby Bien's, while her pallid companion smoked pill after pill of opium. Be-

tween them was the smoking layout with its tray of strange utensils and a tiny, shaded lamp over which the man toasted the bubbling bits of poppy pulp to a golden brown. And around them on every mat were others, both men and women, like themselves. In the smoking room at Bien's after nightfall neither man nor woman was capable of a thought nor a desire beyond the one great thought and great desire around which the universe revolved—opium. When that first, and essential craving had been satisfied, friends talked, jested, discussed business or underworld scandal. But until it had been satisfied they smoked.

Bobby Bien's smoking place was a great double drawing room in an old-fashioned house. Everything in and about the room seemed subtly to express its own consciousness and dishonor. The four walls of the room were partitioned into tiny booths by side curtains open toward the room's center. The smokers lay on grass mats, their heads to the walls and each in his own cubby-hole with his own pipe and layout. And a strange and motley company they were.

Above the soft hissing of the pipes a voice pleaded with shrill hysteria:

"For God's sake, Bobby, trust me—for God's sake, Bobby. I've been twenty-four hours without a 'shot,' I tell you. I'm crazy with a 'habit.' I'll pay, so help me God. Give it to me, quick, quick. For God's sake look at me and have a heart."

Sheila raised her head and opened her eyes. She saw an emaciated youth called "Turkey-neck," whose drawn-back lips exposed yellow teeth clenched in a frenzy of torture. By the dim light of the many opium lamps she saw great beads of perspiration well, drop by drop, from his forehead and stream down his haggard cheeks. His body twitched from head to foot in violent paroxysms. The nails of his fiercely clenched hands dug into his flesh as he pleaded abjectly for the

thing she, requiring it far less than he, found it impossible to resist.

"Nothing doing, Turkey-neck, old kid. I've carried you three nights already, and—"

With a sob of pity and full understanding Sheila interrupted Bien's refusal by a peremptory summons.

"Take this bill and let him smoke," she commanded.

The emaciated youth dropped on his knees, hands clasped.

"Thank God! Thank God!" he cried and if there was blasphemy in his words he was unconscious of it. "I'll go to hell for you, miss, if you ever need me. Remember Turkey-neck Morris when you want anything done—even murder. . . ."

Sheila lay back on her pallet and drew in long breaths of smoke-laden air. She knew what each pill would mean to the youth—knew only too well.

THE door opened and a woman rushed to Bien. Through half-closed eyes Sheila saw she was handsomely dressed, and a glimpse of her face beneath its veil proved that she belonged not in an opium den but in a home of respectability and wealth.

"Spread me a layout, quick, Bobby," she cried, her voice quivering with the intensity of unendurable craving. "I swore last night I was done. I said I'd kill myself before I'd come again. I've tried to fight it all night—but I'm here. Quick, a layout and plenty, Bobby."

Another woman even like herself. Sheila understood.

3

HOURS passed. The pills still bubbled over a dozen cone-shaped lamp globes. The smoke cloud in the decrepit old drawing room had become so dense it hid the ceiling, hanging in the air motionless like some giant, animate thing at sleep.

On and on the pills bubbled and hissed over the bowls of the ever-busy pipes. Sheila lay satiated and inert, somnolent but not sleeping. No won-

drous, fantastic dreams were hers; she was just at peace, utterly content, entirely without regret. She was no longer hateful to herself. Calm, quiet, dozing contentment had dissipated all anxiety, all remorse, all difficulty, for opium with Borgian cunning soothes the minds as well as the bodies of its slaves.

Bobby Bien stooped beside Sheila Raymer's escort and gently shook his shoulder.

"Only an hour till daylight, Pete," he warned.

"Oh, no," protested Sheila, raising herself on an elbow. "Why, I've only been here an hour at most. It can't be so late."

"It is," Bobby answered.

The girl sighed and rose. Always it was the same. At Bien's, time lost all meaning and the faint glow of each new dawn was perpetually an unbelievable surprise.

Together the chauffeur and the girl returned to the car. No word was spoken as the man drove to the rear street behind the Raymer mansion. As she left the car she took a bill from her purse and handed it to her companion and then, without even a good-night, she entered her home. She crept up the staircase silently as a wraith and tapped gently on the door of a room that opened into her own suite. A girl—her devoted maid—opened it softly.

"Oh, Miss Sheila, you're so very late. I've been worrying for an hour for fear some of the servants might be up before you came," the girl whispered.

"I didn't know the time. I'm sorry you've lain awake for me. Don't undress me. I'll attend to myself. Good-night, Marie."

Sheila passed into her own bedroom and, carefree as she had been that night when first she had seen Bobby Bien's, she slept as sweetly and innocently as a child.

CHAPTER III

1

It was noon when Sheila Raymer unclosed heavy-lidded eyes and strug-

gled reluctantly back to consciousness. With memory, conscience, too, reawakened. Gone was the mind-lulling tranquillity of the hours at Bobby Bien's. Like dammed waters suddenly freed, full realization of the truth she must face swept over her overwhelmingly. She moaned and covered her eyes with a shaking hand. The life that stretched interminably on before her was arid as a desert, and bleak and barren and utterly merciless. To know that she must live with herself, to know that a bitterly accusing conscience was chained forever to the thing she knew herself to be, was unmerciful torture. And Sheila Raymer was a girl not yet twenty, motherless and fatherless. There was no one to whom she dared turn for aid; alone and unadvised she must struggle on through a battle already lost. Hot tears streaked her cheeks.

"I never knew a mother," she sobbed, "and until now I never knew how a girl may need one."

When her maid had served her coffee and left her, Sheila pushed aside the untouched tray and forced a languid, leaden body to cross the room to her dressing table. She sank wearily into a chair and stared at the drawn face with heavy, dark-ringed eyes that looked back at her from her mirror. For the first time since she had known what mastery by a drug may mean, she passed full and inexorable judgment upon herself. It seemed as if she were a dual personality; that Sheila in the chair who once had been, facing the Sheila in the mirror whom she had become.

"Sheila Raymer, you are an opium addict," the girl whispered to the face in her mirror with the bitterness of gnawing self-reproach behind each stinging word. "You have fought against it night after night, and night after night you have lost. I'll give you one more chance—just one. If you go again to that accursed drug den, Sheila Raymer shall vanish forever from the earth. She must. There is no other way. One more chance—just one—" Then laying her head upon writhing

arms in an irrestrainable outburst of sobs, "Oh, my mother, if you are still where you know and understand what has come to your daughter, help me now or I am lost."

The maid knocked and entered.

"May I dress you, Miss Sheila?" she asked, and as she saw her mistress's tear-stained cheeks her face was grave with the concern of real affection.

"If you like, Marie. Mr. Lewes is to be here at two. I must see him and I can't, looking as I do. Try to freshen me." Then, with a sob between each word: "Oh, Marie, try today to make me look like the girl I used to be."

2

HARTLEY LEWES had tossed away a third cigarette before Sheila went to him in the cozy little study in which she received her intimates. Under his kiss his fiancée's icy lips were unresponsive as marble and as he drew her toward him with an arm thrown boyishly about her shoulders, she quivered inwardly under the sting of unconquerable revulsion, not of him but of herself. As he stooped again to touch her lips she cried out:

"No! No! Please never again," she pleaded, struggling, even as she spoke, to stifle the words.

"Why, Sheila, my dear, what's wrong?" Lewes exclaimed, the careless good-humor of his eyes suddenly clouded with troubled perplexity. "Have I offended you? Am I in disgrace?"

"Not you. Oh, no, not you. The one in disgrace is—"

Sheila checked her confession with its last vital word "myself" forming on her lips, and as she covered her face, tears, searing-hot, fell between her fingers.

"Sheila, Sheila, this won't do," cried Lewes, taking her hands in his and stooping over her with real concern. "What is the trouble? Who has hurt you?"

"Nothing! No one! Let me alone! Don't touch me, please, please." Then as pent-up hysteria mastered her:

"Can't you see I want to be alone? Go and for God's sake never try to see me again."

"Sheila," he cried, and then as she flung herself into a chair and hid her face, Lewes crossed the room and stared out hopelessly on the Raymer gardens. For the first time in his life Hartley Lewes was confronted with a problem that could not be solved with a check-book. He was utterly unable to reconcile the hysterically distressed girl sobbing behind him, with the carelessly gay Sheila Raymer he had asked to marry him because she was a boyishly charming outing companion with whom he had never spent an unhappy nor a bored moment.

He had said love was what he felt for her and believed himself truthful. There was no other girl among the scores he knew for whom he felt the same unmarred spirit of comradeship. He had, until now, looked forward to their near wedding day as one that would make that pal spirit more perfect and unbroken. And now, without a conceivable reason he could guess, the girl with whom he had expected that life forever would be sunny, had told him to go and never return. For the first time in his twenty-five carefree years Hartley Lewes felt the grip of something deeper and more vital than the endless round of pleasures that, hitherto, had filled it.

Sheila crossed to him and laid a regretful hand on his shoulder.

"I'm sorry, dear," she pleaded. "Don't remember what I said. I didn't mean it. I'm just a bit upset—"

"Of course, dearest," he exclaimed. "My car is outside. Shall we drive through the park and along the beach boulevard?"

"Yes," Sheila answered. "And Hart, drive fast, very fast. . . ."

3

THEY were skimming along the beach drive against which the long, slow Pacific surf rolls with such soothing regularity, when the girl roused her-

self from the abstraction of faraway and unspoken thoughts and laid her hand on Lewes' arm.

"Hart, do you really believe there is a God?" she asked. "Do you truly think there is an all-powerful, all-loving Being who rules the universe?"

"I suppose so. To be frank, I never stopped living this life long enough to think much about it," the man replied, struggling to overcome his amazement at such an unprefaced question from a girl he had never known to talk nor to think upon any subject that might not be answered with a jest.

"I wish I could think that, but I can't," Sheila continued after another long pause. "There couldn't be. If there were a loving God why should I—?"

"Oh, Sheila, throw off this morbid mood," interrupted Hartley impetuously. "Why worry your little head with such things? In a month we will be married. Let's look ahead and be happy."

Turning to look into the face of the girl at his side Lewes saw that she had not heard him. Her eyes were intent on the blue, long-rolling swell that stretched to and far beyond the western horizon. Her whole mind was wrapt, obviously, in thoughts to which her face gave no clue. He turned away with a heart pang such as he had never endured, for he realized that the Sheila he had thought he knew as well as himself was an enigma which, unless Fate were kind, he would never solve.

And, meanwhile, the girl was intent upon a bit of driftwood floating out with the ebbing tide upon a vast and uncharted sea. In it she saw herself. But she envied the bit of flotsam, for it was going easily and willingly, without struggle and without remorse, to some far-off haven. Before she might hope to do likewise. . . .

"AND you won't forget we are due at the Carruthers' dinner dance tonight, Sheila?"

At Lewes' question the girl returned with shocked surprise to reality that seemed less real than her mind journey

alone on the unknown sea. The car was before her own home with her companion waiting to help her out.

"Oh, not tonight, surely!" she protested.

"Tonight is the night for which we have accepted their invitation. You are going, of course."

"I'll try, Hart, harder than I ever did before. But if I can't I'll phone you in time."

She hurried up the wide steps, paused for an instant to wave her hand and was gone. Lewes' eyes were desperately troubled as he slid in behind the wheel and shot his car out into the street.

"Something is terribly wrong with my little girl and it's up to me to find out what it is and put it right. . . . I will," he promised himself.

At nine that evening Sheila's maid phoned Hartley Lewes that her mistress was too ill to leave her rooms. At eleven, after having dismissed the maid for the night, Sheila dressed in her plainest street suit and slipped secretly from the home she had vowed on her knees never again to enter. She did not phone for the waxy faced chauffeur but went out alone into the night.

CHAPTER IV

I

BEHIND locked doors in the library of the Raymer home three men, the following evening, debated the problem of the vanished Raymer heiress. Love for her—though each loved differently—had united them in this hour of catastrophe. Hartley Lewes, unconscious of his clenched hands and teeth-bruised lips, paced the room, suggesting, probing, recalling and discarding, in futile efforts to piece fragments of facts into a solution of where his beloved girl had gone and why. Burns Campbell, her uncle, sat with haggard face striving by sheer power of deduction to force even one illuminating ray of light into the darkness of the mystery. Rudolph Britain, banker and Sheila's guardian,

glowered with furrowed brows at a slip of paper he held in hands which for once were unsteady. On the paper in Sheila's writing were these words:

"Hartley dear,

"My life is a broken boat adrift, filling, sinking. Forget me without grief. What is, was to be and Fate must be obeyed. As for me—the broken boat vanished; there follows a tiny ripple; then, silence and peace, I hope. Forgive me.

"SHEILA."

The banker's eyes, called hard by men, misted.

"Poor child," he murmured. Then to Hartley: "Tell us again exactly what she said yesterday as you drove on the beach. That is the one clue she has left us."

"She asked me if I believed in an all-powerful, all-loving Ruler of the Universe. I told her I hadn't thought much about it. And then after a silence she said she couldn't believe there is a God. All day she had been hysterical, frantic. My God, Britain, what has happened to her?"

"My boy, guessing is useless. We must know. Every servant has been questioned. None saw her leave. She sent her maid to bed and during the night slipped out of the house without so much as a handbag. There's premeditation in that. We'll have no publicity, of course, but this is too intricate for us. I'll call the Silverton Detective Agency and make this case a personal matter with Billy Silverton himself. He'll find her."

"Call the Silvertons if you like but I'll make my own search. I'll find her even though no one else can. I love her," cried Lewes, and for the first time, though he had said it often, it was true.

As the three left the library, Marie, the maid, her face tear-stained, slipped down the stairway and laid a detaining hand on Hartley Lewes' arm.

"Come back alone," she whispered.

He nodded with a faint ray of new hope lighting his eyes.

Within minutes Lewes had separated
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from his companions and was closeted with Marie.

"I am not certain I should tell you this, Mr. Lewes. In doing it I am breaking a promise I made Miss Sheila. But I must tell you. I can't stand the responsibility of keeping silent since my little mistress is gone," the girl began.

"For God's sake go on, girl. Speak quickly," cried Lewes.

"I told the others I do not know when Miss Sheila left the house nor that she intended to leave. That was the truth. But there was something I did not tell—something I couldn't tell to anyone but you.

"You love her, Mr. Lewes, and, loving her, you know as I do that she is sweet, pure, un—un—unsullied," Marie continued. "She is all that. Tell me now you know it and—listen."

"I do," fervently.

"Night after night for the past month she has dressed in my clothes, called a car in my name and gone out, God knows where. Often she did not come back until almost daylight. I always let her in. No one else knew. Lately she has been very unhappy. Often I have found her in the morning, crying. The phone number at which she called the car is Market 6700. The driver is called Pete. That's all."

Hartley was on his feet before the last word had left the maid's lips. He laid his hands on her shoulders.

"Never can I repay you for this, Marie," he exclaimed. "I'll find her."

2

In a dingy lodging house room late that night Hartley Lewes stood beside a bed upon which, lounging nonchalantly with a cigarette between his lips and a sneer on his face, lay Pete, the chauffeur of the hard eyes which had never known ideals nor love.

"Tell me where you took her," Lewes demanded and there was menace in each clenched fist. "Tell me where my Sheila is or I'll kill you where you lie."

The chauffeur sat up quickly, his eyes glittering with avarice freshly baited as

he heard Hartley's unconscious use of the name "Sheila."

"It was the heiress herself, not the maid," was the realization that flashed through the man's warped mind. "She's an opium smoker with a habit and she has millions—millions! Easy street, from now on, Pete, for you. I've a meal ticket for life since she's skipped out. But this guy must be ditched."

The chauffeur looked sullenly up into Lewes' face and what he saw there sent a quiver of fear down his spine.

"Kill me or not, I don't know nothing," he ventured.

"You lie," cried Lewes, and Pete felt the fingers of an athlete grip his throat; felt himself jerked to his feet. In his antagonist's eyes was death and Pete recognized it.

"Don't get rough and I'll talk," he gasped, writhing under the relentless fingers on his throat. "Yes, I've been driving her, but she made me promise I wouldn't tell nobody living where she goes."

"You'll tell me. You'll take me now where she is."

At the suggestion that he drive the man of whom he must rid himself to the girl's hiding place, a new and vastly satisfying idea was born in the chauffeur's brain.

"I need a hundred bucks mighty bad. I might take my car out and drive somebody somewheres if I had it," he suggested tentatively.

Lewes opened a bill fold and thrust a bill into his hand. . . .

WITH Lewes beside him, always urging speed, Pete drove through the night. He made many turns, rounded many corners and at last stopped before a dismal house unilluminated by even a gleam of light.

"In there," he said.

Hartley Lewes sprang from the car, all his fears intensified a hundred-fold by the aspect of the place. The chauffeur followed slowly, stealthily. Lewes ran up the steps and hammered on the door which groaned on sagging hinges

under his knuckles. There was no response. He hammered again and laid his ear against the warped panel. Faintly from within he heard the swish of a silken skirt and a voice—a woman's—whispering cautiously.

"Open this door or I'll break it down," cried Lewes. Catlike, the chauffeur crept up the steps behind him, and his lips curled back cruelly over his drug-yellowed teeth. There was a hurried movement within the house; then silence.

Unable to endure another second's uncertainty, Hartley Lewes threw his shoulder against the door and sent it crashing from its hinges.

"Sheila," he cried, springing into a room dark as a tomb. His answer was a spurt of gun-flame that for a fraction of a second silhouetted a woman's face against the wall of blackness. Lewes felt the sting of a bullet as it tore through his shoulder.

As he crouched to leap upon the levelled revolver, a gun butt wielded from behind crashed solidly against his temple. A leaping flare of light, myriad-colored and dazzling, flashed in his brain and died out as suddenly into utter darkness. And then, inert and senseless, he fell upon the creaking floor of the dark house of mystery. Pete, the chauffeur, ran down the steps, sprang into his car and within seconds the roar of his motor was no more than a droning hum fading swiftly into utter silence. . . .

A voice spoke in the room where Lewes lay.

"We got 'im," it said, "I heard 'im fall. Gimme that flash lamp."

A tiny point of light glowed in the darkness and roved the floor, until it fell upon Hartley Lewes, beneath whose head a widening pool of blood spread slowly.

A face peered into Lewes'!

"He's done for," a man's voice announced. "This is bad medicine. We got to beat it, quick."

"Let me look at him."

A woman stooped over Lewes. A

hand felt along his breast for the police star it expected.

"He's not a copper," she cried. "And, God forgive me, I've killed him."

"You shot him, but who cracked him on the bean?" the man's voice questioned perplexedly. "Someone did. See the mark of the gun butt. Come on, let's go."

But the woman, as though she had not heard, kneeled beside Hartley Lewes and in her eyes as she studied his face, was an agony of poignant regret and remorse.

CHAPTER V.

1

FROM San Francisco to New York the elect of crookdom respected Alibi Ann for the intuitive genius of a mind which, through many long years of continual hazards, had never failed once to outguess the shrewd plans for her downfall laid by her chosen enemies, the police; and crookdom loved her because she was impervious to love. Though many men of many kinds had tried, no man could say that his proffered affection had stirred Ann's heart ever so faintly. Those who were of her own kind she chided gently as she refused them; at those who were of the alien world outside crookdom, she merely laughed; and men who sought her with the thought of her never-depleted bank account in their minds, she flayed mercilessly with stiletto-edged invective. But to none had she ever listened.

Alibi Ann was a crook-woman who found her pleasure in a ceaseless battle of wits with the authority which the law confers upon a blue uniform and a police star; and her relaxation was found in the long hours during which she lay alone upon a pallet in her apartment—hours in which the uncanny intuition that protected her was sharpened to abnormal acuteness. The men whom she chose to work with her obeyed her blindly and were proud that they had been given the opportunity to

obey. Ann, in a word, was unanimously honored and acclaimed by her own strange world over which she ruled regally; also unanimously berated by the outside world upon which she preyed.

It was into the concerned, almost tender face of this woman that Hartley Lewes, son of wealth, looked when he struggled feebly back to befogged half-consciousness many days after the affray in the House of Mystery.

At first he knew only that he was alive with a woman's face peering down into his. He wondered dully where he was. He wondered why the woman with the kindly eyes was with him. She was not Sheila. The name was no more than a purely mental reaction. Perplexedly he repeated it again and again and was dimly astonished to find that somewhere deep within himself it suggested a neglected duty, imperative and all-important. Then he drifted off again. . . .

Days passed during which, without fully awakening, he was dimly aware of strange voices near him and of an odor that eased deliciously as each whiff reached his nostrils and lungs. . . .

"He's So Long Micky, the Gold Coast prowler, who left the police kidding notes every time he robbed a big bug's home in Chicago. Here's his picture in the paper when they sent him to Joliet. I dug it up in my scrap book. Now am I right?" This speech, in a man's heavy voice, smote Lewes' consciousness.

"That looks like his picture," a woman said. "Prison has changed him some but there's a likeness, surely."

"So Long Micky," repeated Hartley somnolently.

"Hear," cried the man. "He's telling his name."

"And I shot him thinking he was a 'copper,'" the woman mourned self-accusingly. After a pause she added suddenly: "Micky was a 'hop' smoker, wasn't he?"

"Sure. Had a half-ounce a day habit."

"Then that's the trouble now. This poor boy is suffering with a yen. He needs a few pills. That's what the doctor doesn't guess. I'll bring him out of his stupor," Alibi Ann exclaimed.

There was the soft, bubbling hiss of opium over a heat lamp. Lewes stirred and took a deeper breath. A bamboo pipe-stem was pressed against his lips.

"Here's a pill, Micky. Take a long draw," Alibi Ann urged.

Scarcely comprehending, Hartley obeyed. He realized he was drawing smoke into his lungs and almost instantly all pain and the ever-present, goading demand that subconsciously urged him to fulfil some unknown duty, vanished. Peace and a sense of utter well-being sent him drifting into the lustrous Valley of Illusion. . . .

2

No marvel of which mankind has knowledge compares with a human brain. It is an obedient servant when its master—consciousness or will-power—is awake and active. But when consciousness is submerged in slumber or sickness or intoxication the brain works on indefatigably of its own volition and wanders, often, into mysterious channels. And when consciousness returns, the brain jealously keeps the secret of its clandestine labors. From this basic truth the weird ramifications of Freudism and psycho-analysis have been evolved. In this duality of the brain's recollection of its own secret impressions, and the mind's separate memory of its doings and impressions in waking, normal hours, lies the solution of the fact that Hartley Lewes, when he finally awakened to apparent normality in the apartment of Alibi Ann, was entirely certain he was So Long Micky, a burglar with a prison record.

The awakening from the depth of his stupor was sudden. On that evening as Ann held the opium pipe he had learned to crave to his lips, Lewes sat up and looked into her face with the light of seeming sanity in his eyes.

"Have I been ill long?" he asked.

"Three weeks," answered Ann, a quaver of thankfulness in her voice. "Thank God you have come out of it at last. We feared you never would. Do you remember what happened to you?"

"Of course. I went to that dark house where Pete, the chauffeur, said he had hidden my Sheila. I broke down the door. Someone shot me. Someone clubbed me on the head. I went down and out. Who brought me here?"

"I did. I shot you, poor boy, thinking you were a 'copper.' But neither I nor anyone with me hit you. When I found I made a terrible blunder the least I could do was to take care of you. Do you want to tell me who you are?"

For three weeks Hartley Lewes' brain subconsciously had heard himself called So Long Micky, burglar and opium smoker. And now, from its own subconscious depths, it glibly supplied its answer to Alibi Ann's question.

"I'm So Long Micky, the Gold Coast prowler," replied Lewes without the slightest hesitation. Hartley Lewes' normal mind did not know that the crook term 'prowler' means burglar but he used it as readily as though he had done so all his life.

"We guessed it from your picture in the paper when you were sent up. If you're hiding out from the cops you're safe here. I'm Alibi Ann," she explained, not without a trace of pride.

"That's good. But, Ann, I want—I want—" He groped for the word to name his craving.

"A few pills of 'hop'," she supplied, nodding understandingly. "You've been getting them every day. I knew you would never get well if we let you lie and suffer with a habit when you couldn't tell us what you needed. I'll spread the layout on the bed and cook you a few. Then another good night's sleep and you'll be on your feet tomorrow. . . ."

As the easing effect of the opium grew upon him, Lewes' mind began to grapple with the problems he had set it

—the problems which dominated it in its final moment of consciousness before the blow struck in the dark house.

"Do you know a man called Pete, the chauffeur?" he asked Ann.

"Never heard of him, and if he was a worth-while crook I would have."

"He's the man who took me to the house where I was knocked out. He must have been the one who struck me. I must find him and when I do I'll kill him."

As So Long Micky, Lewes announced his intention to kill as unconcernedly as, in his true personality, he would have mentioned an intention to take a friend to luncheon.

"I'll have my bunch inquire about this Pete and if he's in town they'll locate him," promised Ann. Then at the urge of womanly curiosity, "Who is Sheila?"

"She's my girl. Pete has hidden her away somewhere. He told me she was in the dark house. That's why we went there. I'll never rest till I've found her."

As she twirled the golden brown bit of poppy pulp over the flame Ann felt a tiny pang—the first of the kind she had ever experienced—prick at her heart.

"I'll help you find her," she offered with *camaraderie* that was a bit forced as she handed him the pipe and the pill.

She smoothed Lewes' pillow, tucked the covers about him as though he were a child, vanished behind the curtains of an alcove and, a moment later, switched out the lights. Lewes heard her throw herself on her couch and almost instantly her regular breathing proved her asleep. But even under the influence of the drug he had taken, sleep did not come at once to Hartley Lewes.

"Where did I lose Sheila? How did I lose her?" he murmured over and over until the endless repetition of the unanswerable question at last wafted him into uneasy, troubled slumber.

3

DURING the week that followed his

return to consciousness Hartley Lewes' physical recovery was rapid. The bullet wound in his shoulder was completely healed and except for the bandage on his head—a precaution insisted upon by the discreet physician provided by Ann—he could have begun at once the man-hunt he intended should end in the death of Pete, the chauffeur. But the mental pall did not lift and, imagining himself So Long Micky, it was manifestly foolhardy to invite police interrogation by appearing on the streets with a bandaged wound. In consequence Lewes and Alibi Ann spent the week together in her apartment and the absolute sexlessness of their minds enabled them to become, frankly and freely, the best and most intimate of comrades.

But to Alibi Ann the week was one of more than mere comradeship for during it she discovered, wonderingly, a joy she never had known existed—the joy of cooking for a man. Always having been alone, Ann seldom prepared meals in her apartment. But with Lewes to care for it was a necessity and one that each day became a greater, sweeter pleasure. Hitherto she had thought her life abundantly filled by her chess game of wits with the police. Never having had real companionship she never had missed it. But now, since Fate and her revolver's bullet had forced her to mother and nurse the man she believed to be So Long Micky, her innate womanhood, long dormant, sprang, full-fledged, to life, nevertheless.

"I've passed the word to the boys of my 'mob' to locate this fellow Pete and they'll not fail," Ann assured her companion again and again. "But tell me something about your Sheila. Who is she? What does she look like?"

Lewes opened his lips to answer and found his mind a blank. He struggled to summon a mental picture of the girl he knew he loved, and could not. Her name and that she had been taken from him were all he knew.

Ann mistook his silence for reluctance to speak. . . .

FAR along in the night steps ascended the stairway and there was a tap on the door. Lewes sprang up, tense and anxious, as if an unexpected knock were something he had always had cause to fear.

"Don't worry. It's Overcoat Benny. I know his step," said Ann as she opened the door.

"I've brought news of this Pete bird you're looking for, Annie," announced the sharp-visaged visitor who wore a gorgeously patterned overcoat though it was a sweltering night in midsummer. "He's no real crook. He's a dollar-a-day Kelly pool hound who used to hang out in cheap dumps on the Barbary Coast and drive a little old bus for hire. A couple of months ago he began to show up night after night in the dance halls and all-night cabarets with a swell-looking dame."

"That's my Sheila," cried Lewes, springing to his feet and tearing the bandage from his head. "I'm going now to get Pete. Where shall I hunt?" he demanded of Benny with all the pent-up fear and anxiety of long weeks quivering in his voice.

"Where the lights are brightest and the jazz loudest, is my best dope, pal," answered Ben. Then almost commiseratingly he added: "He's sure grabbed himself a meal ticket somewhere for they tell me he's got a roll of jack that keeps his clothes out of shape packing it around."

Lewes' teeth ground with animal-like ferocity as he rushed off to dress. Within minutes he was back at Ann's side ready for the street.

"Did I have any money when you brought me here?" he asked.

Ann opened a drawer and handed him ten hundred dollar bills.

"This," she said.

"Can you give me a gun?"

Ann stepped close to him and laid both her hands on his shoulders in a caress that was the instinctive impulse of motherly protection.

"Yes, boy, I can and will," she said.

"But, remember, a gun is a mighty good thing to have and a mighty bad thing to use. Dead, Pete will never take you to your girl. If you find him, follow him until you locate his room. Then we'll kidnap him and take him to the house where you were hurt. Once inside those doors we'll make him talk. Good luck, boy."

She clasped both his hands in hers and her fingers lingered on his as she let him go. The instant he was beyond the door she turned quickly to Overcoat Benny.

"Follow him, Benny," she commanded. "See that no harm comes to him and before daylight bring him back here—to me."

CHAPTER VI

1

HARTLEY LEWES began his man-hunt with feverish intensity of purpose.

"Where the lights are brightest and the jazz loudest," he repeated to himself, as if in Overcoat Benny's words lay a definite address at which Pete, the chauffeur, was to be found.

As he reached Market Street a flare of multi-colored lights caught his eye. "Thalia," read the flaunting sign. Before he reached the carpeted stairway that led down to the all-night cabaret, Lewes heard the blare of brass, the crash of cymbals and the rattle of cowbells, all done to the syncopated, sensuous time of a dance that left nothing of its meaning to the imagination.

But Pete the Chauffeur was not in the Thalia, and Lewes went out to make a weary round of other such all-night places where the best women (according to the world's queer rating of respectability) and the worst danced and drank side by side through those dangerous hours of the night that glide imperceptibly into the dawn.

Before dawn Lewes' weariness had become acute physical agony. Perspiration poured from his brow, though it was icy cold. From head to foot every muscle twitched under the stress of a

torturing pain he did not understand—a pain, however, that made him long instinctively for Alibi Ann and the floor pallet with its shaded heat lamp and its long draughts of all-easing opium smoke. When at last he was forced to abandon his search for that night he returned straight as a homing pigeon to Ann's apartment, and Overcoat Benny, who had trailed him at Ann's order all through his night's wanderings, smiled to himself and murmured:

"She needn't have worried about him going back. He couldn't stay away—not with the sort of a habit he carries."

The door of Ann's apartment was open almost before Lewes knocked.

"Oh, Ann, I'm so tired and worn out and ill," he cried. "I want—"

"A good long smoke," she supplied. "You shall have it, boy. But first, coffee to brace you up."

The coffee was waiting for him in a steaming samovar. He gulped it, scalding hot and black, as she commanded, and threw himself on the waiting pallet in an agony of impatience. Very swiftly Ann supplied him with pill after pill and, after a half dozen, the delicious ease of mind and body which he craved stole gently over him.

"This, Ann, surely must be the most precious thing in the world," he murmured contentedly. The woman hesitated and a line of unspoken concern furrowed her brow.

"Opium exacts its own price, and it's a high one—a very high one, Micky," she warned, but Lewes neither heard nor cared.

2

THE nights that followed were a long series of disappointments, each the counterpart of its predecessor. Evening after evening Lewes left Ann's house buoyed by the ever-fresh hope he found in the drugged smoke he drew from her long-stemmed opium pipe. Evening after evening he made his weary round of the hundred and one resorts where frivolity, music and dance, whetted by liquor, made men and women forget the

past and ignore the future in seizing a present hour of moral amnesia. At dawn each day he hurried back to Alibi Ann to ease his tortured body and anguished mind with the balm of poppy smoke.

At whatever hour he returned Ann was up and waiting for him with fresh-made coffee ready in the samovar and the lamp and pipe waiting upon the floor pallet. And when the pungent smoke of many *lai yuen* pills had soothed his body and mind to placidity and renewed hope for the morrow, Lewes and Ann talked and found in those long hours that seemed so short, a mutual and perfect comradeship as deliciously soothing as the smoke that made it possible. In no slightest degree did the sexless character of their friendship alter. To themselves they were not man and woman, but pals thrown together for a week or a month by a fortuitous Fate.

THEN late on a night spent, as usual, in fruitless search, Lewes trudged up Ann's stairway and found her talking with a youth over whose emaciated cheeks, parchment-like skin was drawn as tight as a drumhead. In his hand the stranger held a ring—a brilliant, glittering diamond, sparkling in blue-white iridescence.

At sight of the ring Lewes staggered against the door with both hands clutching his temples.

"That ring! Mine! Sheila's," he cried, his voice rising in the shrill crescendo of emotion too intense even to be curbed. He snatched the ring from the amazed boy's hand and pressed it to his lips. Something within his head seemed to snap, to dissolve, to split as a pall of fog splits right and left with the coming of a suddenly-risen sea breeze. Lewes drew his hand across his eyes as if to wipe away something that had obscured them. With the movement, full memory returned, and the man who for so many half-conscious weeks had been So Long Micky, in thought and deed and in his own belief, became himself—Hartley Lewes!—in

whose hand lay the engagement ring he had given Sheila Raymer.

"Where is the girl you got this ring from?" he demanded fiercely of the youth from whom he had snatched it.

"I ain't tellin' nothin'," the boy answered with staunch loyalty.

"You will tell," cried Lewes threateningly.

"I won't, not if you kill me."

With returning judgment Hartley appealed to Ann.

"Annie, I am Hartley Lewes—"

"Not the millionaire's son!" interrupted Overcoat Benny incredulously.

"Yes, I am."

"Why, then have you told us you were So Long Micky?" from Ann, in whose eyes joy and sorrow seemed fighting for mastery.

"I believed it. Never during all these weeks has my memory gone farther back than the moment in the dark house when I was struck down. I went there with Pete, as I have told you, to find—" with the name "Sheila" on his lips he realized that now, since his identity was known, he must never again mention her name until he had found her. "To find the girl I love—the girl to whom this ring belongs. Never until the sight of the engagement ring I gave her shocked me back to normality and memory did I doubt I was So Long Micky."

He took both Alibi Ann's hands in his.

"You believe me, Ann?" he concluded.

The woman's eyes searched his face for the fraction of a second and read truth there.

"Yes."

"Then tell him to take us to her—both of us, quickly."

"Where is she, Turkey-neck?" Ann asked of the still-unconvinced drug addict beside her.

"Are you sure it's all right, Ann?" he questioned sullenly. "Are you sure she wants to see him? I wouldn't do her dirt for all hell."

"I'm sure, Turkey-neck," Ann declared.

"Well, I'll take your word, but I wouldn't take his. It's up to you to make it come out all right. The little girl who gave me that ring to pawn for her is up at Bobby Bien's joint smoking 'hop.'"

"No, no," cried Lewes frenziedly. "Not smoking opium!"

A convulsive tremor shook him from head to foot. For the first time since his return to Ann's he realized that perspiration was streaming down his face and dripping from his fingers. For the first time he realized that he was in the throes of his nightly "habit" agony and remembered that he himself was a drug addict, bound hard and fast in the toils of a merciless, cruelly unrelenting master.

"Both of us," he cried brokenly, covering his face. "Both of us caught in the snare of the same destroyer. It is true of me. It mustn't—it can't be true of her. How could it have happened to my own dear girl? For God's sake, boy, take me to her."

With "Turkey-neck" leading, still half unwillingly, and Alibi Ann by his side, Hartley Lewes went out into the night to reclaim the girl he loved. But he went with fear in his heart, for now he knew, as the terrible pangs of his "habit" shook and contorted his body, how unbreakable was the bond of slavery in which he and Sheila Raymer had been entrapped.

CHAPTER VII

1

SHEILA lay upon a pallet in Bobby Bien's, eagerly inhaling the smoke that for a few brief hours made life seem almost endurable. Each night since her disappearance she had been there. Each night with the coming of darkness' protecting veil, she had hurried from the cheap little room in which she lived through days of mental agony, to Bien's and the momentary relief that the poppy still granted her—but grudgingly. On this night she knew she had come to the end.

Her money had been gone for many, many days and, one by one, her jewels had followed it. Tonight she had given her faithful messenger, "Turkey-neck," her last pawnable gem, the engagement ring given her by Hartley Lewes. With it she intended to pay for the bottle of morphine that lay against her breast—a bottle whose contents would carry her in sleep to death's hoped-for oblivion.

No other road any longer was possible. On the first night she appeared at Bien's after vanishing from her home she found Pete, evil-eyed and sneeringly confident, awaiting her. He demanded money.

"Why should I give you money?" she countered.

"To keep me from telling your lover and your friends where you are and," after a significant pause, "that you are Miss Sheila Raymer, heiress and 'hop-head.'" The last words were whispered in her ear with brutal emphasis. In a panic of fright Sheila had paid. And she had paid and paid again. . . .

As she waited for "Turkey-neck" to return with the last packet of money she would ever touch, her mind turned back to the happy, dear, carefree days she had spent with Hartley Lewes—days now doubly precious because they were gone beyond the possibility of recall. Tears of poignant regret that now he could never know how entirely she loved him, welled from her closed eyes and lay upon her cheeks. And then so clearly she would have believed it real had she not thought it could not be, she heard his voice speak her name.

"Sheila! My Sheila!" the voice whispered, and in it was all of love and tenderness and sorrow that a man may feel for a beloved woman discovered in misfortune.

"Hartley! My Hartley!" she answered, thankful for the solace of even an illusion.

Someone knelt beside her. Someone raised her in his arms. Someone's quivering lips were pressed against her own. Slowly Sheila Raymer opened her eyes and saw that, in truth, she was

in the arms of Hartley Lewes. For an instant she clung to him, sobbing with the happiness and security that his protecting presence gave her. Then, as she remembered where she was, and what she was, she cried out in terror and thrust him from her.

"Oh, Hartley, why did you find me? Why have you hunted me down and learned this dreadful secret that drove me from you?" she moaned. "It would have been kinder to have forgotten me as I asked. Can't you realize what torture it is to have you find me in this place—what shame it is to me to have you see what I have become?"

The intuition of love guided him to the right act and the right answer. He lowered her gently to the pallet and laid her head upon the teakwood block that opium smokers prefer to a pillow. Then he, too, flung himself down beside her, the layout tray and lamp between them.

"Sheila, I'm suffering with a terrible 'habit.' I'm in agony. Cook me some pills quickly, please. We'll smoke together and tell each other the whole truth," he said very gently.

Before the words had left his lips Sheila was up and leaning over him with fear and grief—both for him—revealing themselves in her eyes and every line of her face.

"Oh, no, no, Hartley! Not you. You must not. You don't realize what it means. You can't guess the horrible, unbreakable fascination of it once you have begun," she pleaded, echoing almost exactly his words spoken of her a half hour before.

"I'm not beginning, Sheila. That blunder began, by mistake, weeks ago. I am a drug addict. Smoke with me."

Hartley Lewes' solemnity told her he spoke the truth. There were tears in her eyes as she lay back on the pallet but she did as he bade her. The two smoked opium together, pill after pill.

With the craving of their minds and bodies satisfied they told their stories, each speaking the full truth without evasion. Sheila explained that in seeking to look upon life at first hand she

had first gone to Bobby Bien's and, without even knowing she was in danger, had been caught and engulfed in opium's irresistible undertow. When she realized she was powerless to overcome the drug's insidious lure, she had left her home to surrender the lost battle without disgrace to her name, her lover and her friends.

With equal frankness Lewes told of the disaster that befell him in the dark house and how Alibi Ann, believing him already an opium addict, had made him one in reality while he lay unconscious in her apartment.

And when they had finished, the two who loved as they never had done in their happy, normal days, looked at each other with misted eyes and desolate hearts while they shared their mutual enemy and one remaining solace—the opium layout.

It was a full hour before Alibi Ann came to them.

"Have you two poor children told each other all there is to tell?" she asked. "Yes? Then do you care to tell me, too? The only thing left in the world for me is to help undo the wrong I have done—if I can."

When Ann understood the whole story of what a girl's ignorance and her own misapprehension had done, her eyes, too, were misted.

"There is no way out," moaned Sheila.

"There is," Ann challenged. "I'll prove it. You two babes come with me to my apartment. Alone, neither of you could hope to win a fight against the habit that has gripped you both. But together and for each other you can win. I know the way. Will you come?"

"Yes," they answered together.

"Then tomorrow you will leave San Francisco together and, together and alone, you will make your fight—a winning fight."

"A winning fight—together! Sheila and I will make that fight against opium, Annie. Show us how," Lewes urged and was surprised, as he reached out and took Alibi Ann's hands in his,

to feel them quiver convulsively under the touch of his fingers. Neither he nor Sheila realized that Ann was making and winning her fight—a fight to renounce love without bitterness.

"Come," urged Alibi Ann, her face averted. Together the three left Bobby Bien's.

2

ANN drove Sheila and Hartley directly to her apartment. Once there, while she made and served coffee, Ann chattered volubly of a hundred inconsequential things in her effort to counteract the illogical despondency that steadily grew upon Sheila and Hartley as their drug craving returned. Ann understood only too well the suffering, both physical and mental, they were enduring. She knew if they attempted to fight the grim spectre that oppressed them now without preparation and surrendered in the end, as they must, they would never again gather the courage and confidence for a winning battle.

"Now, children, I'm going to cook you a few pills—just enough to ease your habit," Ann announced as she lighted the opium lamp and spread the floor pallet. "While we smoke—the last smoke, my dears, either of you are ever going to have—I'll explain how and where you are going to overcome your 'hop' habits. You will try for each other's sake. You will follow my advice, won't you? Promise me that."

"Oh, yes, yes!" cried Sheila, pitifully eager for encouragement.

"I know you can," declared Ann stanchly. "It won't be easy; it will require every atom of grit and will power you have; you will suffer bodily torment which will sap endurance to the last drop; food or sleep will be impossible; your traitorous minds will cunningly supply a hundred plausible reasons for quitting the fight, but you won't quit for each will know that if one surrenders you will both be drug slaves for life. It's going to be hard, children, but for each other's sake you will win."

Without intending it, Ann sighed and instantly became ostentatiously busy with her yen hok and opium lamp. She gave each of her guests several pills in quick succession and saw their limp, disorganized bodies cease their convulsive twitching while the clammy beads of perspiration that dripped from their pallid foreheads and cheeks vanished with the return of a faint flush of normality.

"You two pay strict attention now," Ann began, after a pill or two had eased her own jangling nerves. "No one with a drug habit like yours and mine can be cured permanently without preliminary treatment. Sanitariums will tell you they will cure you but they won't. They'll dose you into a stupor until the worst of the physical agony is over but they don't strengthen either nerves or will, and, so, turn you out a nervous wreck, almost certain, sooner or later, to go back to a drug for relief. To get away from opium and stay away, you must first of all gradually taper off your doses until a tenth of what it takes to satisfy you now will keep you from suffering. Then comes the vital day when you stop absolutely, entirely. You'll have days of hell after that, dears, but if you stick through them you're free—both physically and mentally, for it's by your own will that you've endured those days and never afterward need you return to the old bamboo 'stem' unless you deliberately choose to."

Measuring each pellet with the utmost precision, Ann toasted forty opium pills, graduated from the size of a large capsule down to that of a tiny match head.

"There are forty pills here, one of twenty graduated sizes for each of you," she continued. "I'm going to give you enough smoke tonight to keep you comfortable until late tomorrow. At day-break I'm going to take you to a little cabin I have in the Mendocino redwoods. We'll take supplies for a month. When I've seen you safely settled there—it's miles from the nearest neighbor—I'm going to leave you to yourselves.

Tomorrow night you will each take the largest of the twenty pills, dissolved in warm water. That will relieve your habit—almost. The following night you will take the next size pills and so on, using less and less each day, until at the end of twenty days you will be down to these." She picked up the two smallest pellets. "Then you're done with 'hop.' Then you must fight—fight as you have never fought before. You will do this for each other—and for me, won't you?"

Together Sheila and Hartley reached across the layout and pressed Alibi Ann's hand in confirmation of their covenant. Lewes wondered again that it trembled at his touch; he wondered if Ann, too, did not wish to be free of opium's shackles.

"Annie, won't you stay up there with us and do what you're having us do? Won't you break your dope habit, too?" he pleaded.

"Oh yes, please," urged Sheila.

"Stay up there with you! No, no, I couldn't! I won't! I don't want to stop smoking," Ann cried almost hysterically. Hartley saw with amazement that she was fighting desperately for self-control. "You don't understand about me, my dears," she explained after a difficult pause. "My life is lived in a different world from yours. I haven't the reason you two have to stop—the love of someone I love. That would make it possible even for me but it will never be—never." Sheila saw tears in Alibi Ann's eyes.

"This is the last time we three will be together beside a layout. We'll allow ourselves one final, farewell smoke," cried Ann with forced light-heartedness. "We haven't much time, you know. We must be off at sunrise."

The opium pellets hissed and bubbled over the lamp flame as Ann twirled them deftly on the yen hok. The pipe went round and round. The false ease of mind that the fumes of the poppy lend for a brief hour, lulled Sheila and Hartley to complete relaxation. Fears vanished before roseate-hued visions of untroubled tomorrows. In a dreamy

somnolence that is neither sleep nor wakefulness, they forgot the past and ignored the future. It was opium's final, grudging loan to them—a loan amply secured by a note-of-hand given a merciless creditor who allows no day of grace in collecting usuriously in the coin of sorrow and degradation.

Ann smoked, too, but without any such visions to cheer her. For a month Fate had given her a man to nurse, to mother, to serve, to love; Fate, at her own command, now was taking him out of her life forever.

She raised herself on her elbow and looked across the layout to the man and the girl opposite her. They lay with eyes closed, Sheila's head on Hartley's shoulder and her hands clinging to his as his encircling arm held her close against his breast. They seemed so young, so inexperienced, so happily oblivious of the life-or-death trial just before them that Ann's own distress was submerged in a great wave of maternal pity.

"Kismet," she murmured softly. "Poor lambs! A Mother Ann is what they need; a Mother Ann is what I will be to them." Through the window she saw the faint light of dawn. A new day had come—a new day fuller and sweeter to Alibi Ann than any she had ever known.

Ann smothered the flame of the opium lamp and began to prepare breakfast. Already renunciation had molded her face into softer lines; already her mother-role had purged her soul of the envious adder's sting which threatened it.

As they drank their coffee, Overcoat Benny tramped up the stairway.

"The car's waiting, Annie," he announced.

"And we're ready to take the road—the road up out of the dark Valley of Illusion," Ann answered. "Come, children."

CHAPTER VIII

1

THE old stage road from Willits, which marks the inland boundary of

the redwood belt, to Fort Bragg, once in the Indian days an army outpost but now a thriving lumber port on the Pacific, spans thirty miles of magnificent redwood forest. It climbs from the little hamlet of Sherwood to the crest of Bald Mountain and there reveals the Pacific, twenty miles away, rolling gently at the bottom of terraced ridges and shadowy canyons covered by a majestic forest that was old when the Wise Men were guided by the Star of Bethlehem.

A few miles from the summit Benny turned off the stage road and stopped the car in a wooded glade from which only a foot trail led on into the unbroken forest.

"From here we must walk but it's not far," Ann explained. "We'll carry in what we can and while I'm settling you comfortably Benny and Hartley will bring in the rest of the supplies."

Within a quarter of a mile a sudden twist in the trail disclosed a level, treeless meadow covered with knee-deep grass. As the intruders emerged from the shelter of the woods, a mated pair of deer stared at them with wide, astonished eyes for an instant and bounded away; from the security of a high perch in a redwood, an indignant gray squirrel spied them and barked an angry protest; chipmunks scurried to safety and then, lured by curiosity, turned to watch the newcomers with shy, inquiring eyes.

"I hope they—the wild things to whom this is really home, I mean—will be friends with us," Hartley exclaimed with a depth of feeling that amazed himself.

"Oh, Hartley, that was my own thought as you spoke," Sheila cried deliberately. "This little secluded kingdom of theirs seems like a world apart from the one we've left—like a better, kinder, more tolerant world."

Ann threw open the cabin door and Sheila and Hartley followed her in, hand in hand. There was but one room on the first floor—a big living room and kitchen combined, with an immense fireplace at one end and a cooking stove

at the other. It was furnished with Spartan-like simplicity. A narrow stairway led to an attic bedroom.

"Now I am going to put Sheila's room in order and get the things I have brought for her unpacked while you men carry in the remainder of the supplies. Benny and I must be on our way back within an hour," announced Alibi Ann with unnatural impatience.

"You won't stay even for dinner?" exclaimed Sheila regretfully.

"I can't; I mustn't," Ann answered almost brusquely. "Come, let me show you the room upstairs."

Sheila wondered at the dynamic energy and haste with which Ann righted the bedroom under the cabin's eaves and unpacked the clothes she had supplied.

"You'll be comfortable here, won't you?" she asked when all was in order and, as Sheila nodded, she took the girl into her arms and held her close against her breast. "You won't fail; you won't let him fail. Can I trust you to be strong for his sake?" she whispered with a queer tremor in her voice.

"Yes, I promise," the girl answered.

Ann drew out a sealed envelope.

"If an hour comes, as it may, when either of you knows you can't carry on a moment longer, open this," she said. "You are to open only if you know you're beaten, remember that. Lay it away, and don't even tell Hartley you have it. And now, dear girl, good-bye." Ann's kiss was feverishly hot and her body quivered as Sheila clung to her.

Downstairs, Overcoat Benny and Hartley were leisurely stowing away the kitchen supplies when Ann interrupted with a peremptory summons.

"Come on, Ben. We haven't a minute to lose. I must be back in San Francisco before morning," she insisted, then, turning to Hartley, she took both his hands in hers. "Good-bye, Micky," she said.

"Not Micky—Hartley. I'll never again be Micky," corrected Lewes. Ann's laugh was harshly unnatural.

"You're right, Hartley, you'll never

again be So Long Micky," Ann agreed. "But you were Micky—my Micky—for a month," she added inaudibly.

"We'll write you soon how the fight is going with us," Sheila suggested.

"Don't write me until it's won," replied Ann. "Don't stir from this cabin until you've been ten days without a pill. Write then and I'll know you're safe. Good-bye, both of you."

At the edge of the clearing she turned and waved her hand and then darted ahead of Benny and ran along the trail as if to escape an implacable pursuer. When her companion reached the car Ann was behind the wheel.

"I'll drive going back. I'm in the mood for speed," she informed him.

Overcoat Benny looked at her with surreptitious intentness and Ann, intercepting his look, saw that he knew her secret.

"What you're thinking is true. I admit it. I do care for him," she cried. "But don't pity me. I'm happy, do you understand? Yes, happier than I have ever been in my life for I've done something for the man I love that no one else in the world ever could have done for him. He'll never know and I'll never forget, Benny, but I've made my fight against myself and won. . . ."

AN hour after Alibi Ann left them Sheila Raymer and Hartley Lewes faced each other from across the cabin table. Their faces were ashy gray; their hands were clenched; perspiration oozed from every pore in their tortured bodies. They were alone, at last, with the merciless Thing they must conquer.

Neither remembered they were together under circumstances their friends, if they knew, would never forgive. Neither remembered they were unmarried. The code of propriety demanded by the world from which they had fled had ceased to exist. They were not consciously man and woman; they were comrades making a mighty fight against mighty odds.

At midnight Hartley, with haggard eyes, silently questioned Sheila.

"Yes," she agreed, "we can't stand it any longer."

He dissolved Ann's largest opium pellets in hot water and they drank like famished creatures. As if an easing elixir had been poured into their veins, a deliciously comforting warmth flooded their bodies; their pain-racked, twitching muscles grew calm.

"Good night, dear. I can sleep now," said Sheila, stooping to touch Lewes' forehead with lips no longer icy. She climbed the stairs to her room and Hartley echoed her sigh of exhaustion as she threw herself upon the bed. He stumbled to his bunk in a corner of the living-room and almost instantly was asleep.

2

NINETEEN days had passed since Hartley Lewes and Sheila Raymer had hidden themselves away in Alibi Ann's mountain cabin to conquer their drug habit—nineteen days of racking torture, eased only by a few hours of broken sleep each night after they had taken the diminishing-sized pills Ann provided. Both were haggard, emaciated, leaden-limbed and weak as if from a long and critical illness. But they clung indomitably to Ann's program. On no day had they exceeded their allotted ration of opium. And now they were face to face with the final, crucial struggle. On the table before them were their last two pills, each tiny as a match head. When these were gone, no more were to be had even though they died for lack of them.

The man and the girl stared at the remaining pellets with mingled dread and fascination. What they had endured during the nineteen terrible days behind them was a terrifying warning against the greater ordeal just ahead. Each furtively watched the clock. They had agreed they would not take the pills until midnight. The hour after eleven seemed longer than a lifetime. But imperceptibly the lagging hands crept

upward until they crossed at the top of the dial. The clock struck twelve.

"Thank God. At last!" cried Sheila with a hysterical sob of relief. With shaking hands, Hartley poured water upon the fragments of opium. They gulped the dose as though it were nectar. The mental expectation of easement quieted them for a brief moment but they waited in vain for the warming relief they had learned to expect from the pills.

"If only we could rest! If only we could sleep," Sheila moaned. "Do you feel anything, Hartley? Are you any easier?"

"I think so. I don't know. A little, perhaps, but not much," he answered almost hopelessly. "Come, let's walk. That helps some."

They paced the floor until physical exhaustion compelled them to stop. Every joint was an aching agony, every muscle a throbbing, twitching knot, every nerve a red-hot needle of torture.

"The pill was too small. It hasn't helped. Last night's didn't either. I wouldn't tell you but it didn't, it didn't," Sheila lamented despairingly.

"Neither did mine," Hartley answered. "If a dose leaves us in this condition what will tomorrow be without any?"

"Oh, Hartley, can we stand it?"

"We must."

They looked at each other with frightened eyes. Could they live through tomorrow without losing reason? Even now they were clinging to sanity, they knew, by the most fragile of threads. They tried to walk again and could not. Suddenly Sheila threw herself upon the floor.

"Hartley, Hartley, help me!" she pleaded frenziedly.

"I will. There's a way I've provided—"

"There is a way," Sheila cried. "Ann foresaw this moment. She left a letter she said would save us when we couldn't carry on any longer."

"Where is it?"

"Under my pillow. Get it, Hartley."

The thought of tomorrow is killing me. I can't live through it."

Hartley stumbled up the stairs and lurched down with the letter clutched in his palsied fingers. Together they tore it open: together they read it. This was its message:

"Courage, dear children. You have won your fight. The worst is over. For two days you haven't had any opium. The last two pairs of pills were only quinine colored with coffee. What you are suffering now is the end. Tomorrow you will be easy. In a week you will be well—and free, thank God!

"ANN."

Sheila stumbled into Hartley's arms, sobbing with joy.

"Bless her! Bless her! She has saved us again," she cried. "She says the worst is over. Every hour will be easier. Hartley, we've won—won—won!"

They clung together like children awakening from a frightful nightmare. The mental relief of the realization that the crisis was behind them and that the dreaded tomorrow was to be welcomed, not feared, accomplished the miracle of physical alleviation. It was mental treatment, scientifically sound, that Alibi Ann was giving them. When they had grown quieter, Lewes completed the revelation Sheila had interrupted when she remembered Ann's letter.

"My dear, there's something I haven't told you," he confessed. "Ever since we came here I've been afraid you might sink into delirium when the last of the pills was gone. I didn't dare to be without something for such an emergency. Look!"

From a desk drawer he produced a bottle containing a dose of the opium solution.

"I saved it for you from mine, a spoonful each day," he explained.

"You saved it for me! Oh, Hartley, how dear and how strange," she exclaimed, "for that's exactly what I've been doing for you. See!" From beneath the couch she produced another bottle also containing a dose.

"We saved for each other," they re-

peated together and lapsed into a shy silence as they realized that never had they meant so much in each other's lives as in this moment of mutually spontaneous sacrifice!

"What shall we do with it?" the girl asked. Her glance at the drug was one of undying hatred but no longer one of fear.

"This with mine," Hartley answered unhesitatingly, and sent his bottle crashing against the stone fireplace. Sheila's followed it instantly.

"When we choose to do that we are safe," cried Lewes joyously. "We have nothing more to fear from opium."

For the first time in many weeks they slept that night without narcotic aid. It was neither a painless nor a restful sleep, but it was sleep, for although their bodies still suffered under the drug's thralldom, their minds were freed, their will-power restored to militant confidence in itself. The following day, as Ann had promised them, their suffering was halved and no pardoned prisoner ever looked forward to liberation with greater or more humble gratitude than they.

3

A WEEK later, from behind the far corner of the rock which formed the sloping back of their favorite lounging place in the meadow, Sheila and Hartley saw a furry gray nose cautiously appear and vanish and reappear, while it wrinkled itself questioningly as it caught the alluring scent of the apple in Sheila's hand.

"Sh—h, here he comes, the darling," she whispered. The two sat very still. Inch by inch their Little Brother of the Forest—hopelessly unimaginative folk with no knowledge of faery lore would have seen only an uncommonly plump wood rabbit—drew nearer to the outstretched hand that offered the coveted slice of apple. The Little Brother's big, timid eyes questioningly searched the faces of the two mammoth creatures he was learning to accept as friends. They

were friends; instinctively, as wild creatures do, he felt it. He hopped nearer and still nearer until his nose touched the apple. Then he sat upon his haunches at the feet of his host and hostess and breakfasted contentedly. A chipmunk—another and Littler Brother—whose striped coat absorbed its sheen from pure sunshine, sat on Hartley's wrist eagerly pawing at the fingers which concealed the bread crusts he had learned to expect.

"Bless them, see how they trust us, Hart. How beautiful life is when one let's it be," Sheila whispered and paused, listening. A gentle breeze rustled through the high tree tops; from the canyon, far below, came the soothing murmur of running water. "It's so heavenly peaceful here. Ah, Hartley, in all my life I've never been so happy as I am now," she added fervently.

"Nor I," he agreed. Then, with a sigh of sincere regret, "I shall be sorry when we leave."

"Leave," echoed Sheila. "Oh, my dear, are we going to leave? Must we?"

"I suppose we must—some time," he answered. "The world we used to live in, which seems so far away now, isn't really. It's still close behind, reaching out, I fear, to reclaim us to itself and—"

Precipitately the Little Brother of the Forest scurried out of sight. In the woods behind him Hartley heard a twig crack and, turning, he saw a man and a woman on horseback emerge into the glade.

"And here comes the intrusive world now. I feel like hiding as our Little Brothers do, Sheila," he added regretfully.

"So do I. I wish we could," the girl agreed as they rose to welcome their unwelcome visitors. As the two riders drew nearer, Hartley shaded his eyes against the sun and stared at them in alarmed surprise.

"Oh, Sheila! that's Jack Bentley and his wife," Hartley exclaimed, whirling around toward her with a rueful face. "Of all the friends we knew in the old

life we left behind, I would rather any others had found us. Bentley and Ruth will never understand—"

"Understand what, dear?" Sheila questioned as he paused and she saw deeply troubled anxiety in his eyes.

"Why we are here together and alone with that little finger unringed," Hartley continued, gently touching the third finger of Sheila's left hand. A blush of embarrassment dyed the girl's cheek and, momentarily, her eyes were downcast and averted. Then, taking Hartley's hands in hers, she looked up courageously into his face.

"Hartley, I don't care what the Bentleys or anyone else thinks of us," she said with a challenging ring in her voice. "Once I would have, but now society's conventionalities are mere trivialities to me. No matter what an evil-minded world may believe, we know the truth. If the truth does not shame us, why, then, should we fear lying gossip? And besides—"

A shout from the man on horseback interrupted Sheila.

"I say, old chap, we've strayed off the road. Can you direct us to— Hello! Ruth, look! We've found Hart Lewes and Sheila Raymer, as I live! What are you two conscienceless runaways doing up here?" Bentley exclaimed excitedly as he leaped from his saddle.

"Silly question! Can't you see they are honeymooning?" Mrs. Bentley interjected smilingly as she alighted from her horse and joined in her husband's greetings.

"But the whole town has been buzzing with curiosity about you both ever since you dropped out of sight weeks ago," Bentley protested. "Your guardian and uncle, too, Sheila, have made a mystery out of it all. They wouldn't admit that you were married or that they knew where you were."

"They didn't know. We didn't tell anybody where we were going when we came up here," Hartley explained. "The simple truth is we purposely ran away from the city and everything it represents."

"Come and see our little cabin while we have luncheon," Sheila invited.

From the doorway Mrs. Bentley stared with frank amazement at the Spartan-like simplicity of the cabin's scanty furnishings.

"Isn't it lovely! Look at the view we have of these wonderful mountains and over there on the far horizon lies the ocean," Sheila exclaimed, joining her friend at the window.

"But, my dear, where do you house your servants?" Mrs. Bentley questioned.

"Servants! Why, we haven't any," Sheila answered, "I am our own cook,

"It's absurdly obvious that you two are very much in love," she said almost enviously, and then, after a pause broken by a laugh that grated harshly: "With each other, too."

"Yes," answered Sheila, "we are." She saw and secretly treasured the dazzling flash of joy which lighted Hartley's eyes as he heard her frank confession.

After luncheon, the Bentleys, who had lost their way in riding from Fort Bragg to the railway at Willits announced they must hurry in order to make their train to San Francisco.

"What a gorgeous story we'll have to tell about you two love birds when we



and if Hart isn't a polite deceiver, a most satisfactory one."

"Haven't you even a maid?" from Ruth, amazedly. Sheila laughed.

"Whatever would I want with a maid up here? Half our fun is in serving ourselves—and each other."

It had long been common knowledge among their friends that the married life of Jack Bentley and his wife was far from happy and Ruth, as she looked curiously into Sheila's radiant face, sighed involuntarily.

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get back," Bentley chuckled as he and his wife remounted. "Won't we," agreed Ruth, and as she had done several times, glanced curiously toward Sheila's finger, from which a wedding ring was missing.

After their visitors had gone, awkward constraint marred the hitherto untainted companionship of the two who looked after them from the cabin windows. Until the outside world in the guise of the Bentleys had interjected itself into their haven of refuge, Hart-

ley and Sheila had been blissfully content in the joy of their emancipation from opium. Each knew that the diletante embryonic love for each other which once, ignorantly, they had believed to be love's Omega, had blossomed in the soil of sorrow, mutually endured and conquered, into a flower of happiness their awed fingers had not dared to touch. But each had seen and remembered Ruth Bentley's curious glances at Sheila's unringed finger.

The constrained silence had lasted many doubly-long minutes before Hartley spoke.

"You told Ruth you are very much in love, my Sheila. In the old days, dearest, I thought I loved you, but all I felt for you then is as candlelight to sunshine compared to the love in my heart now. Sheila, dear, was it the truth you told Ruth?"

"Less than the truth," she whispered.

Hartley's arm encircled Sheila's waist and drew her, unresisting, to him.

"Will you make this our wedding day?" he urged.

"Yes," she whispered even more softly and felt herself lifted and held close in beloved arms which pained with the joy they gave. For a long, long second they looked into each other's

eyes in frank, unashamed revelation of all that throbbed blindingly within their breasts. Sheila's eyes closed as Hartley's lips bent to hers in a caress which blotted out consciousness of all else in the world.

"My girl! My wife," he whispered.

"My man! My husband," she answered.

An hour later, as they waited on the crest of a high ridge for the little logging train that would take them to Fort Bragg and a clergyman, they looked down together into the deep dark ravine below them whose malevolent shadows seemed aptly to symbolize the drug slavery from which they had escaped.

"The Valley of Illusion in which once we were captives," murmured Hartley, pointing downward.

A locomotive whistle, echoed and re-echoed by the surrounding cliffs, broke the soul-healing silence of the mountains.

"Come," cried Hartley. Perched high on great redwood logs, they sat hand in hand while the car wheels rhythmically clicked off the last easy miles of their journey together to the sunlit Heights of Happiness.



WHEN a woman hears herself referred to as "handsome," she begins to consider whether she shall diet or take reducing exercises.



WISE MAN: A nimble fellow who always puts off until tomorrow the woman who loves him today.



LYING is the delight of clever women and the downfall of stupid ones.



ROMANCE is the thing that makes life worth living, somewhere else.

The Gayest Georgianna

Jimmy Marlow's head swam because he was in love with twins—and couldn't tell which was which! . . . It was a bewildering courtship, and the story of it is the gayest, merriest little tale in the world! To read it is as stimulating as a dive in the surf!

By Christine Dale

THE hapless Jimmie Marlow ran into Georgianna while she was bending over a run in a sheer silk stocking and she merely looked like a gorgeous copper-haired girl sitting on the staircase of the Weatherby-Peters' country villa. Jimmie was a literal-minded young man, and he didn't know then that when he ran into Georgianna he ran into trouble.

* * *

GEORGIANNA GAY had fought with her mother on the question of a latchkey for over two years. Once having procured it she attached it to her cigarette case with a thin platinum chain—and her evenings and her mornings thenceforth became one and the same. She had reached twenty-three, the flapper senility, without a conscience, without a husband—and without a care. But then there came the incident of the Weatherby-Peters' stairs.

Strangely enough, Georgianna was naturally neat. She could have easily forgiven murderous intentions under a starched shirt front, where she couldn't have forgiven a drop of mayonnaise on top of it. Consequently, when she discovered the mishap to the thirty-dollar hosiery she fled from the floor.

She was wearing silver that night—a long, draped skirt with a strip of brocade and a rope of pearls to attach it to her neck (and to call attention to the skirt, or so she told her mother). Anyhow, Jimmie Marlow, who was coming breezily down the steps, saw the fluff of silver—the red hair—and the most glance-worthy ankles that ever tapered

into huge rhinestone buckles, arched insteps, and a pair of three-inch heels.

"I'm mighty sorry," said Georgianna, looking up. "But just a minute, I'm at the crucial point—have you any scissors?"

He shook his head, red to the earlobes. "You might bite the thread, though," he suggested.

"That's right. Darn clever. D'you sew?"

"Oh—I sometimes mend my own stuff."

"You must be a college professor," she said seriously.

"No, I write."

"Really? Well, that doesn't matter—I like poor struggling young things. Do please sit down and mend my stocking."

After that was over they introduced each other and sallied downstairs together. Then—

"What—on—earth!" breathed the youngest of the Marlows, staggered and bedazzled out of his slicked-hair poise.

"Oh—My twin," explained Georgianna Gay. "We do bat the same sort of eyelashes, don't we?"

They did. But—have you noticed that most peas-in-the-pod kind of twins have doughy complexions and stringy hair? The startling thing about the Gays was that they were two rare editions of absolute perfection. Copper hair, gold-gleaming eyes, radiant smiles—

"This is also Georgianna Gay," his companion was saying patiently.

"Not the same name, too?"

"Yes. We were christened 'Georgia'

and 'Anna,' but I don't like my name and she doesn't like hers, so we both call ourselves 'Georgianna!'

WITHIN a week he was desperately in love with them both. If he hadn't been a stranger to the town he would have been forewarned about these heartless, dashing breath-snatchers. As it was, he was lost.

Oh, yes, they played with him. One Georgianna for motoring, the other for dancing—but the trouble was that he never knew which was which, and the fair ladies of his divided heart took a wicked delight in the fact.

At length he took his uncle, the scientist, into his confidence. Pembroke Trent had long been Jimmie's guide, philosopher and friend. Some of his treatises made Einstein sound like a mere prattler of nursery ballads; he used Latin phrases that would have baffled Cicero, and by way of light reading—a recreation from his working hours—he dabbled in Egyptology! Yet he had accumulated a vast store of knowledge: little scraps of worldliness, fragments of intrigue, adventurous theories, that were as remote as possible from his own personality. Jimmie had made the valuable discovery that his uncle was one of the particular salt of the earth who can give advice—and not care a bit whether or not you take it!

"Very simple," Pembroke Trent pronounced with an airy wave of his hand. "Tell me first—what are you in love with her—them—for?"

"Because I can't help it."

"You're very young! Well, what do you admire most about these wonderful twins of yours?"

"Everything, I guess. Their beauty, their charm—most of all, their everlasting *gayness*—"

"Marry the gayest Georgianna!" said the scientist, coming perilously near a shout. "*Marry the gayest!*"

In the end, Jimmie took him to meet Georgianna of the stairway—and her sister. He left it all to his uncle.

THE sisters Gay greeted the visitors

in their own apartment, which made up a wing of the family's huge house. It was fitted lavishly with heavy silk curtains, the shade of old gold, and with strange rugs from the Orient, colorful and exotic. Bronze incense burners let forth little streams of scented smoke, and a table littered with modernistic fiction and delightfully frothy magazines stood near a group of silk-bosomed arm-chairs. Even a savant couldn't help but like it.

Because he was so much older and a scholastic dignitary and all, the Gay sisters each perched on one arm of Pembroke Trent's chair and made a fuss over him. Jimmie's uncle! Why not? Yet Jimmie was vaguely uneasy.

They were both dressed in orange skirts and batik satin smocks, and they had both bound black silk sashes around their copper-colored hair. They were both, as anybody would admit, incredibly lovely. Professor Trent sighed gently and happily . . . he studied them both for a long while, wondering if both or either of them gave a gay little darn for his infatuated nephew.

"I have a new cottage of some nine or ten rooms at the quiet end of the beach," he commented as the subject turned to the advent of the summer. "And I'm going to give a house-warming for a group of young people next month—no, I'll make it next week. Will you come?"

And the sisters Gay thought that a house party—under the auspices of such a delightful old egg as this—would be one of those affairs which they simply never missed. Consequently . . .

THE professor made a fine little figure in a bathing suit. He was almost as attractive as Jimmie, who affected blue and orange stripes—and a red bath robe. However, both of them faded into insignificance beside the Gay sisters—glorious mermaids in the scantiest of black slips and the creamiest of creamy flesh-tints. Oh, they were lovely! And gay? They made the other girls, to say nothing of the ultra chaperone, look as sticky and lifeless as gingerbread dolls.

It was while the four of them were

boating that the great test came—not that the professor had planned any such test. . . .

Jimmie's surprising uncle had just bought a delightful little yacht, trim and shining white, and the morning had dawned as clear as a baby's eyes. The party, in fact, was impromptu, and the only adventurers ready to try the new vessel were the owner, Jimmie Marlow and the Gay twins (who, to be sure, were always ready for anything).

Of course Jimmie was almost helpless in his general state of love, bewilderment and utter rapture—and equally of course the professor hadn't spent his cloistered life learning the art of sailing. But the cold chicken sandwiches were excellent—and St. Peter himself could have danced to the tiny phonograph, which was blaring forth little bits of Broadway to the blue, blue waves. The professor read gorgeous poetry to them from the ancients, and the Gay sisters responded with duets. Jimmie nudged his uncle exactly fourteen times.

"Aren't they darling?"

"They are!" said the professor.

THE squall came up unexpectedly. The small craft heeled dangerously. One minute afterward all four of them were in the water.

"Now's your chance!" shouted Pembroke Trent to his young kinsman—but Jimmie muffed it.

They managed to swim for fully twenty minutes—striking vigorously for the shore. But the current was against them and suddenly, swiftly, it began to rain.

"Look!" bellowed the professor—and he wasn't looking at the sky.

But Jimmie paid no attention. He wanted to get to land, and he wanted to make it snappy. He looked, in fact, very much like a brilliant striped fish, quite a bit agitated and very unhappy.

But the professor was watching the Georgiannas. One of them was swimming frantically, breast to breast with Jimmie, clutching at him now and then, and whimpering a little. The other

Georgianna had caught hold of an oar (left from the boat, which had long since drifted out to sea) and she was half leaning on it, splashing furiously with the other hand, and pushing her little pink toes against the water with a huge amount of glee and self-satisfaction. (It was lucky they'd worn bathing suits, thought Trent—admiring the glimpse of the little pink toes.)

Suddenly this second Georgianna began to sing, shouting wickedly in the direction of the professor.

The tune was lilting, nautical—and rather naughty, somehow, as well. The words went something like this:

"Did you ever go to sea?
With your little sweet-ie?
Did you ever make a lover
With blue skies all above her—
When it's wet, so wet—and you're cold,
so cold,
Did you never try yet, just to be a little
bold . . ."

The rest was lost in a splash—and by that time the schooner had come up to rescue them anyhow. . . .

BUT when they were ashore, the professor took the elbow of the singing Georgianna and piloted her behind the biggest rock on the beach.

"Jimmie wanted to find out which was the gayest one," he told her then. "But he was in too much of a hurry—and I've found out all by myself. Hardly seems fair, does it?"

"Are you proposing for your nephew?"

For answer he grabbed her in his arms. "I'm proposing for myself! Georgianna! You darling—you darling—"

"You're a cold, intellectual scientist," she reminded him thoughtfully.

"I'm a hot-blooded, rearin', tearin' man!" he countered, and kissed her again.

Several minutes later Professor Pembroke Trent carefully tied a string around the third finger of her left hand.

"I don't want to get mixed up," he said, "with my nephew and my nephew's Georgianna. . . ."

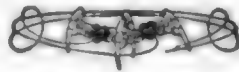
"Honi Soit"

By Stuyvesant Barker

SHE removed her pink crêpe combination, slipped off her sheer gray silk stockings and stepped gracefully into the baby-blue porcelain tub. What a charming picture she presented! A veritable Venus indeed—the Venus of a Phideias or a Botticelli.

Slowly her rose-white form glided beneath the surface of the highly scented water while, scarcely three feet away, he sat and gazed with a mad desire, his eyes sparkling, his fingers twisting convulsively. The lovely creature continued her dainty ablutions. . . .

And yet, not five minutes prior to this, the fellow had not set eyes upon the lady of the bath! For that matter, he hasn't set eyes on her yet—for a locked and bolted door separates them in a transient hotel. And what he so greedily gazes upon is merely a case of bootleg liquor, recently procured by a bell-boy of the establishment. . . .



Roof Garden: Spring

By Oliver Jenkins

THEY sit laughing and drinking at a corner table,
In this gilded Babel.
*Children, little children,
And this is their playground.*

When the sweaty orchestra crashes into being,
When brass and silver instruments moan and shriek,
Then they will rise from their table, and dance
Cheek to cheek.

*While somewhere tonight, unnoticed, without sound,
Pale apple blossoms flutter to the ground.*



The FOG

By Sutton Vane, author of "Outward Bound," the theatrical sensation of the year in New York and London. Thousands who saw it will never forget that amazing last scene between the two lovers, Henry and Anne. It was a scene of bewildering passion and beauty—and mystery, too.



In this exquisitely written story, Mr. Vane relates how it was that the two were given their second chance. Whether or not you saw the play, you will find this tale tremendously appealing. Strangely enough, neither Henry nor Anne is the principal figure in it. The real hero is Jock, Henry's lovable, faithful dog-comrade. . . .



ALL day the fog had lain, yellow and dense, a deadened thing in a deadened street, and the street lived only in its sounds. The sound of footsteps and muffled talking, of two dogs barking at each other; the sound of the milk-cart on its jostling round, the little shrieks from each gate the milkman entered, the milkman's falsetto cry. . . .

The coalmen called at three houses in spite of the fog. Till evening you could hear the sullen, diminishing roar of the bags being emptied, and the small coal breaking and spattering beneath heavy boots.

But the fog began to lift at 10 o'clock, and the lamp at the far end of the street gave the wet wall its pallid green. At half past ten it had made greyness and shadows of the garden; and at eleven, when the fog had vanished, it filled the whole room with a watery light, and showed Anne with her young hand just limply touching Henry's cheek, as though fallen away from an embrace.

It was a very ornamental room.

The wall-paper was ornamental, with roses and birds and trellises over and over again. The jug and basin were ornamental, with roses. There were ornaments on the mantelpiece, and an ornamental cuckoo clock.

The room was crowded and untidy. Clothes poured from the drawers of the dressing table. This was because the newspapers had been taken hurriedly from the bottom of each of them and stuffed in every crevice of the window, so that no air should enter and no gas escape.

The unlit gas hissed evenly from the jets, and at regular intervals the meter made a little clicking noise.

As the night wore on the noises from the street the other side the wall became quieter and intermittent. After 12.39, when the last train mumbled away from West Kensington to Ealing, there was nothing but serene lamplight and lonely, hurrying footsteps. Once a taxi drove up from the other quiet roads, clicked its door open, slammed it shut, and drove away again. A baby cried

somewhere, was hushed, and was crying again. . . .

The cuckoo clock sang one startling note. Anne quickly raised herself, said, "Henry, don't worry—don't worry, dear!" and Henry turned a little to her.

II

ABOUT half an hour before the fog really began to lift, Jock sprang through the kitchen window, ran (a very wet and disgruntled dog) along the dark passage, pushed open the door of the bedroom with his nose, and had a very curious reception indeed.

He found Anne, very silent, lying on the bed with her face buried deep in her arms, the sort of thing Jock had seen her do before now, and Henry (very excited and white, Jock thought) hurriedly pulling the newspapers out of the drawers and stuffing them round all the edges of the windows, which Jock rather liked, and helped Henry to get the clothes out.

Then Jock did not quite know what happened. At one moment he was in Henry's arms, right up against Henry's white face, and Henry was talking very quickly at him. The next moment he was out in the dark passage, and the door was shut.

He listened for a little, and scratched. At one time he heard Henry moving toward the door, and thought all was well, but Henry did not open it. He called "Jock" in a queer broken voice, and "Jock, old man," and moved away again. Jock wondered why he called that way and yet kept the door shut, and scratched again, and cried.

He gave it up at last and wandered into the garden. He did not think Henry's queer behavior was worth worrying about. He had always known Henry was a fool. An adorable fool, but a great fool. An unimaginative man. A man who could see no evil in the sly gait and eyes of cats, no wickedness in a red dress,

or a milk-cart. . . . A man who would throw a ball about for half an hour, and then put it away, just when the game was at its very best. A man who *would not run*. A man who sometimes started to run, but wouldn't keep it up. . . . A man who talked far too much to Anne—particularly during the last week. There had been a lot of nonsense during the last week. Far too much excited talk, far too much, and far too little quiet brooding by the fire. Henry seemed to have quite forgotten their wonderful hour by the fire after supper every night. It was a very wonderful hour! You put your chin hard against the nice stuff on Henry's knee, and closed your eyes, while he stroked, and stroked, and stroked. And if he left off stroking, you had only to look at him and he started again. . . .

And Anne was always crying into her hands like that. If she wasn't doing it on the bed she was doing it in the armchair. Anne was a greater fool than Henry, if possible. And perhaps Anne was not quite so adorable as Henry. Although it was quite three weeks ago now, Jock could not quite forget that affair of the pink ribbon collar. . . .

As a matter of fact, although you didn't want to be in any way unkind, you had to admit that Anne was really the cause of all the trouble. There was no denying the fact that there had been no trouble at all until Henry had taken him along to Anne's flat that afternoon. Jock remembered that afternoon very well. It was the first time he had ever seen Anne. She opened the door for them—a pale, quiet, slim, nice person. She and Henry had murmured "Come ins" and "Thankses" and gone quietly up the hushed stairs.

Jock remembered it very well. It was getting dark apace. Anne and Henry talked in a very ordinary way for a few minutes, and suddenly were very quiet after Henry had said "It's no good, Anne. I've tried. It's no

good." So quiet they were then that you could hear the jingling of the harness on the horse standing far below, and the occasional stamp of his hoof. You could hear a barrel organ making a faint noise in another street. . . .

Then suddenly Anne had shouted. Anne was not at all given to shouting, he found later. The very contrary. She had suddenly shouted "What did she say? What did she say?" and "She couldn't be so wicked. She couldn't."

Henry took hold of her hand, and she was quieter, but asked again "What did she say, Henry?"

Henry had done a lot of talking then. "God knows what she said, Anne," he had said. "I didn't listen to half of it. She talked and talked and talked. Like a duck. Oh, Ann, the most cruel things. So cruel you couldn't really worry about them. Admitted she made me marry her. Said (Oh, Anne, her cold, glassy eyes!) said she had married me for her convenience, and was going to have her convenience. She's mad. She must be mad. Then I pleaded. Pledged for my sweet Anne—to the duck. She was worse then. She was calm. . . .

"That's dreadful, Anne, her calm," Henry had continued. "She's all noise to the world. Dreadful noise, which makes you feel you want to go and hide, but she's far worse calm. She went to the glass when I pleaded, Anne, and pretended to play with her hair. 'What is the time, Henry?' she said, and I pleaded and pleaded and pleaded. 'Really, Henry, a little sense of humor, please.' . . . She wouldn't answer, Anne." . . .

Henry, Jock remembered, had done a lot of descriptive talk in this manner, while the room grew darker and darker. At last he had said "What are we going to do, Anne?" and they had both been silent for another long period. Then all at once the barrel organ from the other street started its tremendous twanging directly

underneath the window, and a man kept time to it with a hollow wooden thing.

Henry got up and walked to the window, looked out, and walked about the room. When he spoke to Anne he had to raise his voice because of the noise from the barrel organ.

He spoke about Love, and soon got very excited about it. So did Anne. And suddenly they seemed very happy, and stood up, and held each other very firmly, and their voices went all wrong with happiness. . . .

The barrel organ abruptly stopped. Anne and Henry whispered to each other, then quiet again. A penny came singing through the air, and rang sharply in the street. There were footsteps and quiet conversation, and the barrel organ was wheeled away. It started again soon, further up the street. Anne and Henry were still speaking in joyous, low tones to each other.

Then, Jock remembered, he left them. He had found that the door wasn't properly shut after all and gone out on to the landing. He remembered the landing well. It was the most intriguing landing. . . .

THE second time Jock saw Anne was at night, when Jock and Henry had not been long settled in rooms by themselves. Jock remembered that night very well too. Anne had come very late, out of the rain. She had talked to Jock and patted him timidly while Henry was out of the room making her tea, and had seemed very glad when Henry came back again. Then there had been a long talk in front of the warm gas fire, and Anne had stayed ever since. But they left those rooms the next day. Suddenly packed up after quite a noisy talk with the landlady.

They had kept changing their rooms after that, but everything was very beautiful. (Anne was infinitely nicer than the other person. There was no comparison really, as he had

scarcely ever been allowed to see the other person.) There were long walks in open places. Expeditions. The most exciting expeditions. In boats sometimes. The weather was marvelous. A lovely brown sun all day, but just chilly enough in the evening for a fire. Anne was very sensible about lighting fires—more sensible than Henry. A new happiness seemed to have started for them all. They met each morning with bright eyes, conscious of the new happiness. And every evening was sleepy caressing joy.

The trouble did not really begin until they moved into the room before this one. Only one room now, and very uncomfortable. It brought the bad weather. Rain and cold, and choky yellow fogs. The room got very stuffy toward the end of the day, so stuffy that even Jock wanted to get out of it. And nobody ever came to see Anne and Henry, and apparently they never went to see anybody themselves. That, in itself, seemed to upset them more than anything else.

Then one foggy day Anne started tearing a letter she had received into tiny bits, and suddenly crying about it, on the bed. And since then it seemed as though she had never left off crying. Henry was always telling her not to cry, but he wasn't much happier himself. And then they had to leave those rooms.

And Henry had started taking him for dreadful long walks in the fog. . . .

THEY were both fools, and knowing them for fools, Jock did not think it worth bothering about this last displaying of it tonight. Besides, when he was in the garden Jock found another question to hold his interest. This was a very old question, a question that had insisted on an answer as long as Jock could remember, the most horribly irritating question, a question bringing with it endless sweet hopes and endless disappointments—the question of whether he

could catch his tail or whether he could not catch his tail. . . .

Jock could not catch his tail tonight, but the effort had warmed him. He went to his kennel and was soon fast asleep.

III

AN hour later Jock sprang suddenly from his sleep and barked. He pricked his ears, listened, shook himself, pattered down the little path toward the house, shook himself again, and pattered back with the air of one who said it was all right this time, but he hadn't liked it.

Then before he knew it, Jock had barked again, and suddenly turning, he ran as fast as he could back to the house, sprang on the window sill of the little bedroom, peered in, and scratched. He didn't know why he was unhappy, but he was very unhappy. He didn't like to see Anne and Henry lying fully dressed on their beds at this time of night. He didn't like the closed windows (Henry never closed his window) and the newspapers, and the funny smell. He wanted to be with Henry more than he had ever wanted to be with him. He wanted Henry to come and speak very angrily to him for asking to come in at this time of night. . . .

He knew he shouldn't bark at night, but he barked. And because Henry gave no answer and did not move at all, he barked again and again, till all the lamplit stillness gave echoes to his barking. . . .

Rain began to fall, and a wind was coming with it. . . .

Jock's eyes were very frightened now. He paced up and down the sill whining, and sniffing, and scratching, and hesitating. It was all wrong—wrong.

Then it seemed as though Jock had made up his mind. He sprang lightly to the ground, faced the window for a moment, leant right back

on his hind legs, and sprang at the window with all his might.

Jock saw a lot of funny colors on a glaring white background, heard the rending noise of splintering glass, felt rough stone tearing itself away from his forelegs, was in the garden, was rushing madly about the bedroom, slipping on the oilcloth. Then Jock found Henry, put his paws on his chest, and didn't worry any more. He lay quite still and listened to the rain. . . .

It was a long while before Henry spoke, and then his words were quite clear, but seemed to come less from the Henry lying on the bed than from a Henry speaking from the dim, furthest recesses of a long, dark corridor. "We're, back, Anne," he said. "We're back!" and "Look, Anne, it's raining!" Then he was quiet for a long time.

At last he stirred, felt for Anne's hand, found a little piece of her dress, and held it limply.

"Anne," he said. His voice was nearer now. "Anne. Anne, dear?"

"Anne, dear. . . . Can you hear me?" he said, and was silent again.

Jock grunted in a satisfied way and moved closer to Henry.

Presently Anne spoke: "I'm with you, Henry," she said.

"Where's your hand, dear. . . ." said Henry.

"Jock's broken the window . . ." said Henry.

Then there was such a long silence that Jock started crying again. At last Henry spoke.

"Oh, my wonderful Anne. . . . Thank God. . . ."

"Anne, dear. . . . Hold my hand properly. . . . Jock's broken the window, Anne. . . . Speak, Anne. . . ."

"Henry, dear."

Then Henry spoke much louder, so loudly that Jock barked happily for him.

"Anne, dear, there's a wind blowing. Can't you feel it, Anne? Anne, dear, a sweet wind to make us well

again! Oh, Anne, dear, the fog's gone. . . ."

"It's Jock that's had the courage, Anne, isn't it?"

"Yes, Henry."

"Anne, Anne. . . . Can you hear me? . . . Listen. We're going to start again, Anne. We're not going to care about the lying tongues, and the horrible little flat, and the fogs. . . ."

"Oh, the lying, lying tongues! . . ." said Anne.

"We're going to be brave, Anne. Brave. Like Jock. Brave—to face the lying tongues. . . ."

"And we're not going to think we'd be far happier dead. That was all silliness. All silliness. . . . Wasn't it, Anne?"

"I don't want my Anne as a spirit. I want my Anne as she is now. . . . with her hand in mine. . . . My dear, human Anne. . . ."

Henry was talking such a lot now that Jock became quite tired of listening to him. Also the funny smell in the room was making him rather sick, and his nose seemed to get larger, every minute, and the larger it got, the more painful it got, and there was a most curious warm something running down behind his left ear. Jock thought a bit of rain and fresh air would be the best thing for him. He left Henry and jumped lightly out of the window.

When he reached the bottom of the garden he fancied he heard Henry call his name again. Henry didn't seem to want him, but in turning, Jock caught another view of his tail. Was he mistaken, or was he not very near his tail? Was he not remarkably near his tail? Would it not be a very foolish thing to neglect his tail when it *was* so near? . . . It was raining, certainly, and very late, but he felt much better already.

The rain poured down. The wind, blowing strong from the west, sent it with a fine sting against the shattered window, and on Anne and Henry. Jock chased his tail in the garden.

Metropoliana

*(Being a few remarks overheard by one who disguised himself,
late one night, as a taxi driver)*

By John Torcross

"IF Sidney ever finds out, it'll be terrible."

"Oh, dear! I left my mesh bag at that last place we was too."

"There's nobody else, I swear. You're the only one I really love."

"Tell him not to drive so fast, or we'll get there on time."

"It's only four o'clock, dear. Let's take a drive in the Park."

"Will you pay the driver, Harry? Ten's the smallest I've got."

"If we'd a-walked, we'd a-been there by now."

"Besh you fifty dollars I'm all ri' when I get home."

"Tell him to stop across the street, Sh-h-h-h. Don't you get out."

"Say, you needn't sit so close. If you're cold, shut the window."



A Striking Couple

By Charles G. Shaw

THEY were seated in the restaurant with their backs to the cushioned wall. She was slim and blonde with a complexion of ivory and roses, and he was tall and dark. Almost touching him, her hand rested gracefully on the table, and their lips were but a few inches apart. What a striking couple they were! How perfectly mated! Indeed, the eyes of all the other diners were riveted upon them. As the music struck up, she smiled at her aged husband, opposite. He turned to his gawky wife.



The GIRL who kissed because she was curious.

The MAN who disturbed women.

Patricia's Courage

These two met in the social whirlpool of a Newport Summer.



*This story of the growth of a fine love out of a casual flirtation
is by a new SMART SET author.*

By Harry L. Gilchriese

JACK BERESFORD frowned disapproval at the little knot of masculine bathers surrounding the partly denuded but wholly attractive figure of Patricia Berkley. He wasn't quite sure of what he disapproved. Certainly it was not Pat, she was too obviously adorable. Moreover, she was a swimmer of ability and had a right to parade in a slender one-piece suit if she was so minded.

But these ogling males who encircled her . . . well, it seemed indecent, although he didn't think it so for himself to stare. He reflected that he was a fool. After the way he had behaved last night, he observed to himself, he had better examine his own moral, as well as mental, balance rather than sit there condemning the worshippers grouped about Patricia. . . .

Theirs had always been an intimate friendship—Jack had met Pat when he was lying wounded in a French hospital, not long after she had married Charles Addington Berkley—and no sentiment had ever entered into it. Secretly Jack worshipped her, but despite her ability to diagnose the minds of men, Patricia had never discovered his feeling. Perhaps it was because Jack had surrounded himself with an impenetrable wall of reserve—a reserve which was the despair of every debutante from Bar Harbor to Miami,

for Jack was considered a good catch in the social world. Wealthy, unmarried and good to look upon, he had evaded the nets set for him during the last six years and the anglers had almost given up hope of landing him. Their feminine artifices made no impression on him, with the result that he was called "the great unviolated."

Patricia often chided him for not snapping up some pretty "deb," but Jack reminded her that he preferred the seclusion of his club to "domesticity with plucked eyebrows." And Pat would invariably shake her pretty chestnut head and declare that as a lover there was little hope for him. . . .

UNTIL last night. Last night she had sought him out, as she frequently did when her escorts became too pressing, and whisked him away in her high-powered car under the light of a beautiful moon.

"You soothe me, Jackie dear," she told him as the car swung out of Newport into the concrete Providence highway.

Jack turned in his seat, bending forward slightly to escape the rushing wind. Conversation was difficult at fifty miles an hour, but then Patricia never did anything at less than fifty.

"That's hardly flattering, Pat," he

shouted. "I would much rather be a stimulant than a bromide."

She throttled the car down to the lawful rate of speed and smiled sweetly up at him. "Were you trying the prescription on that pair of sub-debs I took you from?"

"Hardly," he grinned. "They don't need stimulating. They fairly effervesce. Why do you need soothing to-night?"

A little wrinkle gathered between her eyes. "I've had a thoroughly bore-some evening," she pouted. "That toad, de Bois, has been trying to make love to me again. I can't see what the dear old ladies who create social fashions find to amuse themselves in that creature. I should love to have his title searched. I'll wager it's about as legitimate as his intentions." And she crashed on the brakes as they came to a sharp turn in the road.

Jack didn't like de Bois any more than Pat did, but he was disposed to debate the question.

"He's really not bad looking, Pat."

"Neither is a leopard," she retorted, "but I shouldn't care to live with one."

Jack laughed. "The experiment might prove interesting," he observed, "if you filed his nails. I can readily imagine a leopard being quite congenial under such circumstances."

Patricia eyed him keenly, a whimsical smile hovering about her lips. "Are you making love to me, Jack?" she demanded. "This is strange language from the paragon of virtue. Explain yourself, or I shall be forced to kiss you from sheer gratitude. That remark was positively improper, coming as it did from the lips of Jack Beresford."

Jack grinned appreciatively. "Don't tempt me, Pat. I might not explain. In fact, there is no explanation. Everyone falls in love with you, so why shouldn't I?"

"Because you are not a professional lover, Jackie, and because you know me too well. That alone should deter you."

Jack was at a loss to explain the un-

usual emotion that stirred him. He seemed to have suddenly become possessed of a new-found daring as he looked into Patricia's lovely dark eyes.

"On the contrary," he replied, "knowing you so well lends weight to the conviction that I am falling in love with you."

"Jack!" exclaimed Patricia in well-feigned alarm. "You almost convince me. I wonder," she mused, "if you are really capable of loving anyone?"

"I suggest that you try me and see," he said, and from his tone Patricia decided that he meant it. She elected to pursue the subject no further. Reaching for the clutch she was about to start the car when feminine curiosity overcame her better judgment. She hesitated while a shadowy smile flitted across her face. Then she turned abruptly toward him.

"Kiss me, Jack," she demanded, chin tilted up to him. "Kiss me," she repeated, as he hesitated.

He stared at her, unable to believe what he had heard. Patricia's tone was commonplace, as though she had asked him to hold her gloves. But her lips were close to his, inviting him to take them. With a sharp intake of breath he quickly gathered the slender shoulders into his arms and drawing her close kissed the partly open mouth. A thrill went through him as he felt the delicate lips respond, unresistingly, to the embrace. He drew Patricia closer, and impelled by an uncontrollable surge of passion, pressed kiss after kiss on her face, neck and exposed shoulder, until she stopped his hot lips with the palm of a soft, white hand.

"Pat, I never dreamed," he breathed as she gently disengaged herself. "I . . ."

She checked this outburst by pressing her hand still tighter against his mouth.

"Nor did I, Jackie," she said. "A devil must have possessed me to do that; so forgive me and try and forget it. I wanted to gratify a whim, a caprice, to find out how much depth of emotion you had. You actually

frightened me for a moment. I assure you my curiosity is entirely satisfied."

Jack looked at her blankly. "I don't understand," he said slowly. "Are you informing me that you asked me to kiss you merely because you were curious?" He was trying hard to get his emotion under control.

"Yes, Jack. That was my only reason."

"But, Pat," he protested, unconvinced, "you gave me your lips! You kissed me passionately, and your arms clung to me."

"Of course I did," she replied. "I asked to be kissed, and I wanted to be kissed, passionately, as you say. Would I have been fair to you had I not responded to the embrace?"

"Then you don't mean . . .?"

"A thing, Jack. Don't say anything foolish. Let us talk frankly. What do you expect of me? To become my lover? This is certainly a new Jack Beresford. You are last person to whom I should have turned for such amusement, had I been so minded. You don't belong to the throng of Don Juans that infest the social world. That's why we have been such good friends." She put her hand on his arm in a little gesture of appeal. "I want you to understand me, Jackie, dear. I don't love my husband—he worships the goddess, finance, and gives little heed to me—but that does not mean that I shall be untrue to him. Perhaps I am strange," she added with a wistful smile, "but I have a few principles about marriage, and one of them is to honor, even though you don't love. Tonight I indulged a foolish whim. According to the rules of the game I ought to see it through, but knowing you as I do I don't believe you would ask me to. Don't you understand, Jack? I am sorry I hurt you. I wouldn't have done it for the world. Please forgive me. . . ."

Jack stared straight ahead as she started the car. His feeling had run the gamut of the emotions, but uppermost in his mind was the thought that he had made a fool of himself. It was

hard to forgive Patricia for letting him do that.

"I suppose," he said, with a touch of cynicism, "that you propose to shut your memory on this little incident. It is probably a trifling episode in your scheme of existence."

"Don't be theatrical, Jack. It doesn't fit your character. It may interest you to know that you are the only man in Newport who has been permitted this little intimacy. After seeing the way it affects you," she smiled, "I don't think I shall ever repeat the experiment."

Jack repented immediately. "Forgive me, Pat," he said contritely, "that was a rotten thing to say. You should have slapped my face for it."

"All right, Jackie," she agreed, and gave his cheek a reassuring pat. Then with feminine inconsistency, she added, "Perhaps I shall change my mind about repeating the experiment . . . some other day." And with a delightful ripple of laughter she touched her foot to the throttle and sped the car on its way, lest Jack decide not to wait.

II

JACK wondered, as he sat on the beach absently pouring sand into an empty clam shell, what had possessed him last night. Never before had he been attracted, physically, to Patricia—at least consciously—and it worried him. He discovered that he was glaring at her as though he owned her, resentful of the admiring eyes that caressed her graceful body. The latent instincts of the savage were welling up in him. He wanted to get up and scatter that group of fawning lounge lizards to the farthest corners of the beach. He wanted to take Patricia in his arms and bear her off. He wanted . . .

Jack gave the unsuspecting clam shell a savage thrust, and rising to his feet, started toward the surf. He needed to cool off, collect his wandering thoughts before he did something ridiculous. He struck out savagely in

the general direction of the coast of Spain. . . .

"Hello, Jackie!"

He turned his head in the water to discover the swiftly moving form of Patricia gliding at his side, with the result that he gulped down the mouthful of salt water that had followed his rapid intake of breath.

"How did you get here?" he demanded, when he was able to talk again.

"Same way you did," she replied sweetly, swinging a beautiful arm over her head and cleaving the water beyond with a powerful stroke. "Where are you going?"

"Africa," he gurgled, and she rippled with laughter.

"You old sea lion. Join me on the golf course this afternoon, if you want exercise. It will be more diverting."

"Done," he assented, and they raced for the pier. . . .

JACK'S body pivoted on his hips as he followed through a beautiful drive from the last tee. He watched the ball soar through the air and come to earth more than two hundred yards down the fairway.

"That," he observed, "is what I should like to do to some of your admirers."

"Jackie," exclaimed Patricia, "you are positively ferocious this afternoon. Since when have you decided to become jealous of me?"

"Since last night," he declared, as they started off toward the last green. "My hat, or rather my heart, is now in the ring. I am giving you fair warning, you may expect another outburst from me at any moment. I intend to have your scalp in my wigwam."

"My gracious," cried Pat in mock alarm. "How many scalps have you got in this wigwam? I hope there are no red-haired ones—I should hate to have my poor little scalp lost among them. And when is this pleasing little ritual to take place?"

Jack looked at her thoughtfully, and unsmilingly said:

"Some moonlight night when a cer-

tain beautiful creature invites me to kiss her again . . . or maybe sooner, who knows?"

A faint flush crept up under Patricia's attractive tan.

"As a bold, bad man you're making progress, Jackie," she laughed. "This," she called Heaven to witness, "is the hater of women, the extraordinary biped whom damsels maintain has the passion of an eel."

"Yet even an eel will turn," he retorted, "when his primitive instincts are aroused. Did you ever see one chasing his mate? They become utter savages."

"Your comparisons are eloquent, *mon cher*, but hardly consistent. When I left you in the water this morning you were in the act of inhaling this section of the Atlantic Ocean, and I am sure no self-respecting eel would do that by way of indicating unbridled passion."

Jack grinned, and as they were nearing the caddies the conversation drifted to other subjects. Just before they reached the club house he asked Patricia if she had noticed that her husband was smashing one of the biggest syndicates that had ever combined against him. Her reply reminded him that the subject of Charles Addington Berkley was displeasing to Pat.

"I am not interested in the doings of my husband," she said.

III

A LAZY sea rolled in on the deserted beach, deserted save for a lone bather who had stretched prone on the sand staring listlessly up at the blue morning sky. Head pillowed in his hands, Jack Beresford was communing with himself at an hour when the greater part of Newport's Summer colony was turning over in its comfortable bed for some serious sleep. He was at a loss to discover just why Patricia had treated him so coolly at Mrs. Wakefield's ball last night, and had just about reached the conclusion that all women were erratic, when he was suddenly aware of a gentle prodding somewhere

in the vicinity of his third rib. Glancing toward the offended rib he beheld a well-formed white foot, graced by a dainty beach slipper, in the act of making another assault on the unresponsive bone. He clutched it quickly, and following the line of trim white leg upward he encountered the gaze of Patricia's very dark, and at the moment, very thoughtful eyes looking down at him speculatively. She was clad in conventional bathing-beauty costume—sheer and daring—which, he had to admit, revealed to advantage the delicate contours of an unusually beautiful body. A loose beach cape clung carelessly to her shoulders.

So absorbed had Jack become in the contemplation of this vision that he stared, wide-eyed, as though he were in a trance.

"Well," said the soft voice of the vision, "are you going to sit there mentally undressing me for the rest of the morning?" Before he recovered she added, "You might release my foot, I'm none too good at toe dancing."

Jack felt the crimson mount to his cheeks. He released the imprisoned foot hastily and scrambled to his feet. "I beg your pardon, Pat," he vouchsafed meekly, "I was rapt in admiration. You are perfectly ravishing this morning. I never dreamed woman could look so delightful at such an unholy hour of the day. What brings Venus to the sea now?"

"This, for one thing," and she held forth a telegram. "I know your habits, so I knew you would be here."

There was no laughter in Patricia's eyes as she handed him the telegram. Her expression puzzled him.

"What is it?" he questioned.

"Read it. It will interest you." A cryptic smile played about her lips, to which he attempted to respond, but one glance at the telegram changed his expression to consternation.

"Understand you being seen too much with young Beresford. This must stop at once or I will take means to stop it."

That was all, except for the signature—S.S.—July—4

ture, "CHARLES." Jack looked up to see a strange light in Patricia's eyes, while that same unfathomable smile turned up one corner of her pretty mouth.

"Well?" she inquired. "What do you think of my delightful husband?"

"I don't quite understand," Jack said gravely.

"Nor will he when I have answered him," she said with a show of anger, "the beast. Behold your Wall Street methods. I am warned, I am threatened . . . I am even humiliated. Very likely every old gossip at Newport will hear of this. If he had to be so abominable why didn't he write me instead of sending an open wire?" She stamped her foot on the sand. She was suspiciously near to crying. "I hate him, Jack. I hate and loathe Charles Berkeley." She ended with a little sob.

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Pat," Jack tried to comfort her, "more so as I am the cause of the trouble. I might have known that some old scandal-monger would try to start something. Friendships like ours are always misconstrued, or misrepresented."

Patricia smiled at him through blinking eyes. "You're such a big, darling boy, Jackie," she said. "It's not your fault that I have an imbecile for a husband. You have always been true blue and sporting. But he . . . he treats me as though I were his mistress instead of his wife, and I don't intend to stand for it. I have never been unfaithful to him, although he has given me good cause to be so; I have not even flirted beyond the borders of decency. That little affair with you the other night was done in sheer devilry, if you like, but with no infidelity in my heart. Of course," she conceded with a flash of her usual self, "the body may have been of indelicate intention, but if the spirit overcomes the weakness of the flesh, the conscience is blameless. Well," she paused, "you seem to have compromised me. What do you propose that we do?"

Jack blinked uncomprehendingly. "I don't understand," he stuttered.

"Sometimes, Jack, you rise to great heights of intellect, and then . . . well, there are times when I wonder how you can be so mindless. That's twice you have volunteered the information that you don't understand. Has it occurred to you that I have been ordered to give up my friendship with you, that I am directed not to be seen in your company any more? . . ."

"Of course, Pat, there is only one thing to do," Jack observed.

"And that is just what I intend to do," smiled Patricia. "When will you be ready to sail with me? . . ."

JACK wondered if his mind was playing tricks on him.

"Please don't tell me again that you don't understand," Patricia continued, watching his confusion with growing delight. "I am asking you to go away with me, a nice long trip, just we two."

"You choose strange subjects to jest about," Jack replied, "and I don't mind telling you I'm in no mood for being amused over this one. Let us talk seriously."

"By all means, my Jackie. Shall I make myself clear? All right. There are two reasons why I don't intend to obey this presumptuous command from my husband. First, because it is too contemptible, and secondly, because it concerns you. So, having determined to go against the wishes of the master mind in New York, there is only one alternative—you. How long do you think it will take Charles Addington Berkley to reach Newport when he learns that I have refused to jump over his little finger? His source of information here will be quick to advise him that I have not obeyed. Do you know what he will do then? He will bluster into our midst, close up the villa, bellow to society—which he detests, and which detests him—and pack me off to New York. A pleasant alternative, is it not?"

"But why not do as he says?" Jack interposed.

"What do you think I'm made of?" she flared. "Would I be likely to give

up one of my best friends to gratify this egotist? Certainly not. Had he ever treated me with respect, ever given me reason for anything but hatred of him, I might have gone to New York and explained to him how unjust was his telegram. But in the very act of sending such an ultimatum he kills what little respect I have left for him."

Jack was beginning to realize that Patricia was in deadly earnest, and with the realization he was recalled to consideration of the alternative she had proposed. This was an unlooked for development, the mere suggestion of which made his pulses beat wildly.

He made a gesture as though to brush it aside.

"Pat," he said seriously, "it won't do. I think too confounded much of you to let you ruin your reputation that way."

"So," she scoffed, "thinking so much of me, you refuse to take me. I suppose you would have me offer myself elsewhere. Yes," she mused as he started at the thought, "there are some men here who, I am quite confident, would jump at the opportunity. It's rather embarrassing, Jack, to offer oneself and have the offer turned down. I don't think it's very nice of you." She turned to him suddenly, a note of appeal in her voice. "You have known me for years, Jack, and I have never shown signs of disaffection. On the contrary I have always kept up a cheerful front, though down here," and she clenched a tiny fist against her breast, "there has been a constant gnawing of heart-strings. I have never known love, or even affection. I am married to a man who serves his own interests; a cold, unscrupulous adding machine, yet I have remained true to him. Do you know what that means? To be bluntly frank, do you know what it means to lead a life of unsatisfied desires, of sex starvation? Well, that has been my lot, and I'll stand it no longer. I might have gone on resisting, even though my body cries out for a mate, had my husband treated me with kindness. But I get nothing from him but insult."

Patricia's eyes were suspiciously near tears and Jack longed to take her in his arms and comfort her. He loved her, he wanted her. He knew now that he had always wanted her, but he fought down the desire to tell her so.

"But, Pat," he said, "you can divorce your husband. Why don't you do that?"

She laughed derisively. "I ask for love and receive advice. And from the Don Juan who warned me he would some day have my scalp. This from the man who but the night before last would have been my lover!" She spread out her beautiful arms and revealed a body of exquisite grace and form. Her eyes flashed. "Am I so undesirable?" she cried. "Must I tell you again that my mind is made up? Whence come these righteous scruples, these virtuous ideals?" She dropped to the sand beside him, a little sob escaping her lips.

Jack maintained a moody silence, and a moment later she looked up at him through tear-dimmed eyes.

"Am I calloused and . . . and wanton, Jack?" she asked plaintively. "You can't understand me, can you Jackie? My whole character seems to have changed over night. All this pent-up emotion is rushing out at once. For the first time in my life I am giving it free rein; you must heed me."

She hesitated a moment and then slowly rose to her feet, Jack assisting her. She smiled alluringly. "It is quite possible that I am falling in love with you, Jack. You are not unattractive, you know."

Jack made a gesture of protest. "Please don't, Pat. Don't jest any more. You stirred a little of the savage in me the other night and I have known no peace since. Underneath this emotional veneer I seem to have inherited there is apparently a smouldering fire. You must not rouse it again."

Patricia's mood changed again. She laughed gaily. "All right, my aborigine," she replied. "Bring your nicest veneer to my house at one, and we'll

luncheon together and talk the matter over."

Before Jack could answer she turned abruptly, and flinging her beach robe in the air dashed off toward the surf. As she reached the water's edge she paused long enough to fling back over her shoulder, "*Au revoir, mon amant sauvage. Until one, chez moi.*"

JACK was troubled. Patricia's moods had always intrigued him, but he had been tolerant of them, knowing her to be a creature of whim and caprice. This was a serious matter, however, not one to trifle with. And yet, he reflected, she had been terribly serious about it. He wondered how much of that extraordinary proposal she had meant. It was just like Pat to come to the point of an issue like this. She never evaded.

Jack shook his head thoughtfully. She was a paradox of femininity quite out of his ken. He watched her strike out fearlessly beyond the break of the surf. An early riser or two had appeared on the beach and the lifeguard had mounted his perch. Jack picked up his bathing robe and stalked off moodily in the direction of his hotel. His thoughts turned to Berkley, Pat's husband, and his scowl deepened. Too bad he didn't succumb to one of his periodic fits of apoplexy. The world, generally, would be better off. Jack grinned as he arrived at the conclusion that the big bull of the market was an equally big ass away from the influence of the Street. He amused himself with this thought, the only definite one he had, as he stepped under the shower.

IV

"ARE you quite sure you have not erred gravely in visiting the den of the wounded tigress?"

Patricia looked at him demurely over the edge of the cocktail glass from which she had just removed her lips. They were captivating lips, aflame with vitality.

Jack looked at her soberly. They were sitting tête-à-tête in a shady cor-

ner of the high-walled garden adjoining the palatial villa of the Berkleys. It had taken him some time to make up his mind to accept this luncheon invitation, alone with Patricia. In fact, at five minutes of one he had been still undecided when a boy appeared at his hotel door with a note from her.

"Jackie, dear," he had read, "I hope you won't disappoint me. I simply must talk to you. Bring your nicest coat of varnish and I'll try not to scratch it."

So he had come. By prearrangement, with himself, he had determined to be particularly reserved, and careful. He would talk sensibly to Patricia, as an old friend should, and point out to her the folly of indulging foolish whims. He would sacrifice his love for her on the altar of propriety. There must be no more emotional outbreaks.

For a full minute he watched her, trying hard to maintain a composure he was far from feeling. Patricia's eyes danced and the corners of her mouth were starting upward. Finally he spoke.

"Pat, it is quite likely that intelligence of this charming scene will reach your husband. Do you think anything but the worst possible construction will be attached to it in view of the morning's development?"

"I am certain of it," she cried, holding aloft the glass. "And it will without doubt evoke the wrath of Monsieur Berkley." She sipped the cocktail with unconcern. "I shall probably be honored with a personal visit this time."

Jack frowned his annoyance but held his peace as the butler appeared to announce luncheon.

"I have heard of people," he said, after they were seated, "who deliberately antagonized their husbands in order to stimulate jealousy, but this doesn't seem to fit your case. What is your purpose?"

"I think I told you this morning that I intended to carry you off with me. I have not changed my mind."

"That item," Jack replied, "has been

deleted from the program. You promised to let my varnish alone."

"Let's see," she continued, "we might catch the *Berengaria*, Saturday, if we hurried. Won't you wire for reservations this afternoon, Jackie?"

Jack bit savagely into a slender piece of toast covered with caviar. It almost choked him.

"Look here, Pat," he announced, while she watched him from beneath half-closed eye-lids, "why won't you be serious? What are you going to tell this irate husband of yours when he arrives on the scene, as it seems certain he will?"

"I shall look very bored and say, 'Charles, it may interest you to know that I am sailing on the *Berengaria* with Jack Beresford, Saturday, so I don't care whether you close the house or not. I shall divorce you from Paris.' It's very simple, Jackie."

JACK devoted the next sixty seconds to the study of his salad fork while the butler hovered nearby opening a bottle of Chablis. He was wrapped in heavy thought. Finally he looked up squarely into Patricia's dark eyes with such significance that she lowered them almost instantly, a faint flush mounting to her cheeks. The butler poured the wine and withdrew.

"Pat," said Jack slowly and with emphasis, "I am going to tell you something I had not intended to tell you . . . ever. I love you, I love you with all the strength of a consuming passion; with all the tenderness of a mother for her firstborn; with all the devotion of a heart that cares." He reached for her hand across the table and she made no effort to withdraw it. "Now do you understand why I don't care to trifle with this sort of conversation any longer?"

Patricia's hand trembled a little as it lay in his. It was out at last. He had said it; and now she was confronted with the alternatives of accepting this love, which she instinctively knew was deep and sincere, or losing him forever. There could be no more *jeux d'esprit*

on the subject, no more evasion of it. Patricia's mind was made up, instantly. She knew that she loved this man more than anything else in the world. There was only one thing to do. And yet, womanlike, she chose to keep him in doubt a little longer.

She looked up finally, and had he been a keen observer Jack must have seen her heart in those eloquent dark eyes. Gently she withdrew her hand, quietly rising from the table. Jack followed her as she walked silently into the lounge, pausing only when she reached the tall French windows at the far end of the room. There she broke the silence, standing with her back to him, the soft curve of her shoulder outlined against the light.

"I'm so sorry, Jackie," she murmured in a voice that was new to Jack. "I didn't know I was hurting you. I am a little beast, I guess, and I ought to be treated as one."

Jack thought differently, but whatever he had to say on the topic was interrupted by the appearance of the butler bearing a tray of coffee. He placed it on the table and then disclosed a copy of society's pet scandal sheet—*Social Topics*—thoroughly condemned by everyone, and thoroughly read by them.

"Mrs. Caruthers' chauffeur left it, mem," he explained. "'E said it was important."

Patricia took it with a premonition of evil and scanned its pages hastily as the servant withdrew. Lydia Caruthers always had one ear to the ground, listening for slander; Pat detested her. Suddenly she paused, read a few lines, and with a little moan of anguish sank to the couch. Jack hastened to her side and picked up the sheet which she had let fall. At the top of the third page, carefully marked with blue pencil, he read the cause of Patricia's distress.

"A certain young matron of undeniable charm, who has been giving Newport debts a run for the favor of eligible (as well as ineligible) young men, is now reported to have concentrated her dark eyes on a well-known young bachelor, who, by the way, has main-

tained a state of celibacy in the face of continued assaults, for many years. Whether the lady's husband is cognizant of affairs has not been ascertained, but we venture to predict that, knowing the methods of this gentleman as we do, there will be fireworks at the fashionable resort when the matter is brought to his austere attention. However, it may be some time before the story reaches his ears, which at present are open only for the music of the ticker tape."

JACK'S face was menacing as he looked up from the report. His jaws snapped together and there was cold, premeditated murder in his eyes. Slowly and deliberately he tore the thing to pieces, mechanically, unconsciously. He dropped the bits to the floor as if to free his hands of their contamination. Then he turned to Patricia, huddled in the corner of the big divan, sobbing softly. Yes, he would go to New York . . . that very night. A cold rage took possession of him. Looking through a haze of red, he visualized himself joyously breaking every bone in the editor's body. He would. . . .

But wait! He was suddenly smitten with reason. Such a course would only create another scandal and lend credence to the nasty rumor. For Pat's sake he couldn't do that. He boiled with impotent fury. Only one thing to do. Of course. Remove himself from further intimate association with Patricia and thereby brand the tale as scurrilous, false and unfounded. Which it was. The decision was made quickly. He sat down beside Pat, awkwardly groping for one of her hands.

"There is nothing I can say, Pat, to express the deep regret I feel about this. I could kill the author of it with sheer joy, if it would do any good. But it won't. Only make matters worse. So I'll do the next best thing. We'll cut this innocent flirtation right here and I'll manage to keep out of your way for a time. I'd go to New York, but that would look too obvious. Don't fret about the rotten thing. I'll scotch any loose gossip I hear. Maybe we can see each other once in a while at a party or ball. I guess. . . ."

He left his guess unfinished for Patricia had turned around with startled eyes, and she was holding to his hand with a grip that marked.

"I guess you won't do anything of the kind, Jack Beresford," she cried, and her lovely eyes poured forth the message that was in her heart. It was unmistakable. Jack held his breath. The next moment she was in his arms, crying pitifully, and Jack was kissing her madly, unreasonably, while she clung to him.

She looked up through her tears, smiling happily. "Must I always woo you, Jackie? It's been terribly hard to convince you that I love you." She snuggled up closer, forgetful of time, place . . . everything. Her lips were close to his, fragrant roses, flaming with passion. He kissed them, earnestly, and thrilled at the warmth of her response. Soft white arms stole round his neck and for a long minute she held him thus. Then she jumped up, laughing tearfully.

Jack was disconcerted. "Will you always be Columbine?" he asked plaintively.

"Am I not shameless?" she laughed. "But there, my Harlequin grows restive. And he hasn't even told me that he is glad I love him."

By way of answer Jack leaped across the room and seized her in his arms. "You perfect darling, I am mad about you," he breathed. And she was happy, but once more she put him away.

"We must talk, Jackie. There is still that little matter of the *Berengaria*." She smiled as she gently disengaged herself.

AND at that precise moment Charles Addington Berkley burst unceremoniously into the room.

"Well," he said, pausing on the threshold. "don't let me disturb this touching little scene."

They turned to face him, Patricia's face going white. Jack steadied himself, looking keenly at Berkley. The man looked as though he were drunk. His face was flushed, hair disheveled

and eyes blurred. He moved unsteadily across the room, his fifty years weighing heavily on the slightly stooped shoulders. With a feeble gesture he indicated a desire.

"Water. Get me some water."

Patricia rang for a servant. The man seemed to be laboring under some great emotional strain; yet Jack was sure he had not seen Patricia in his arms. He glanced at Pat and caught her signal of understanding. No word was spoken, but he saw that she wanted to be alone with this man to bring the matter to an immediate issue. He was reluctant to leave her thus, but there was nothing else to do.

He addressed himself to Berkley. "If you will excuse me, Mr. Berkley, I shall hurry off. Good-day, sir." He bowed, a trifle stiffly, as Berkley grunted something unintelligible. Patricia's eyes were eloquent when she parted with him at the door, promising to phone him later at the hotel.

SHE returned to the room and noticed for the first time the deep shadows under Berkley's eyes, the drawn and haggard face. A tinge of regret surged through her. He was suffering.

"You have had a hard drive, Charles," she said. "Are you ill?"

He waved this aside with a gesture of impatience. "You . . . you have read the papers?" He was watching her, almost furtively.

She steeled herself for the ordeal. "I have seen one paper, a particularly contemptible one. To what paper do you refer?" It was pitifully inadequate, but intuition warned her that there was something here that she did not understand.

He looked at her sharply, a puzzled expression crossing his brow. Then he became angry. "My God," he cried. "Every paper from coast to coast. Do you mean to say you have not seen it?"

"Seen what?" asked Patricia, eyes dilating.

Berkley drew his hand across his forehead in an effort to clear his head. "Then you haven't heard . . . I . . .

of course not. Report out this morning. . . . Oh, my God! What a shock it will be!" His voice choked with emotion, but he finally controlled it and, focusing his glazed eyes on his wife, he continued haltingly, "Patricia, I am bankrupt . . . ruined . . . wiped out . . . smashed—do you understand?—broke!" He collapsed, utterly, dropping back into his chair and burying his face between hands that twitched convulsively. "And you didn't know," he sobbed.

"Charles!" Patricia was beside him, pale and trembling. "What are you saying? Do you mean that you have lost all of your money? Is that what brought you here?"

He looked up through blood-shot eyes. "What else?" He looked at her intently, but was too overcome with his own emotion to discover the underlying cause of Patricia's sudden paleness. He attributed it to the shock. "Here," he said gruffly, drawing a New York morning newspaper from his pocket, "read that."

There was no need to look far. Across the top of the front page, in glaring headlines, Patricia read the tragedy.

BERKLEY SMASHED IN HUGE
COUP BY POWERFUL SYNDI-
CATE; NOTED FINANCIER LOSES
\$50,000,000.

Stunned, Patricia let the paper slip from her nerveless hands. The room revolved before her eyes. She swayed momentarily, but with almost herculean effort braced herself. She suddenly realized that there was something more at stake here than a mere fortune.

"Charles," she queried falteringly, "is . . . is everything gone?"

"Everything," he replied dully. "And more. I borrowed on pledged security. Know what that means?" He raised his hand in futile gesture. "I couldn't stand it any longer. I'd have blown my brains out. So I came here for a few hours with you before they get me." He ended with another sob of anguish.

Patricia forgot her own trouble. She went to him with a little cry of pity. "It can't be as bad as that, Charles. Maybe I can help you. How much will you need to redeem your over-drafts?"

He looked at her wonderingly. "And I thought you didn't care," he rasped, tears in his eyes. "Good God, no. I can't take your money, Patricia. The other way is easier."

"No, Charles. There must be no dramatics. You must fight this out on an honorable basis and clear your name again. I will help you; we will fight it out together."

She realized, suddenly, what this meant, but her mind was made up. The love that she had found, but a short hour ago, must be renounced. Patricia faced this alternative, deathly white. Looking straight ahead with unseeing eyes she swayed against the table where she had leaned for support. It was unjust, horrible, unbelievable. What an unkind wound for Fate to inflict. Love, life, happiness—everything—must be sacrificed. Bitterness came to add gall and wormwood to the hurt in her heart. Was it for this she had walked so happily to the altar five years ago, fascinated by the power and romance of the man and his influence? She knew it for fascination too late. . . .

VI

THE doctor had left, after cautioning Patricia that her husband must have absolute quiet and rest for several days. Another attack might prove fatal.

But there was no rest for Patricia. For a long time after they had made Berkley comfortable she sat before her desk with a heart that was dull and aching. Then she composed herself to write. It was a hard letter, and had Jack, pacing back and forth in his room at the hotel, seen the tears stream down her cheeks, it would have assuaged some of the pain he was soon to feel. Eventually she finished, and kissing his name again, folded and sealed the letter. For several minutes she stood in

tearful meditation before summoning her maid. Then she rang, and with a curt word of instruction to the maid, dispatched the letter. A moment later she sank to the couch and gave her weary little body up to the grief that racked it. . . .

It was growing dark outside when Jack, dry-eyed and grim, read over the letter for the third time. But he did not switch on the lights; there was no need. Every heart-tearing word had burned its way into his memory. A rasping sob escaped from between his clenched teeth. He leaned toward the waning light to read the last lines again.

"And so, Jackie darling, you see where my duty lies. There is no other course I can follow. I must stand by him. Don't judge me harshly, dear, but try to understand and forgive me for the pain I know this will cause you. My heart cries out to you, Jackie, and I shall cherish the love you have given me, always. I shall love you through eternity, my sweetheart, but Fate has decreed that our love shall not be consummated.

"Perhaps some day Fate will be kinder. Until then you, and you only, dearest one, have my undying love." . . .

THE big hulk of the *Majestic*, pushed and pulled by a fleet of puffing tugs, swung slowly toward her berth at the foot of Fourteenth Street. As the little groups of homecomers, gathered along the forward rails, came into view the crowd at the end of the pier became active. Handkerchiefs and hats were waved in the chill April air. Here and there, as the towering bow crept closer, individuals were recognized and greetings, some of the most intimate character, were exchanged.

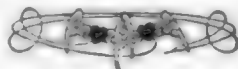
Standing apart from the crowd, keen-eyed and alert, Jack Beresford scanned

the decks for a glimpse of Patricia. It was nearly four months since she had gone to Europe — four unbearable months for Jack — and about seven months since the financial collapse and death of her husband. A stroke of apoplexy had ended his career. People still discussed the dramatic climax of the once powerful financier's life. But the world, generally, never knew that it was his wife who had saved his name from disgrace; who had settled with his creditors from her own private capital. It had nearly wiped out Patricia, but she never flinched. When it was all over she had gone abroad to rest. Jack had seen her only a few moments, before the boat sailed, but there had been an unspoken promise in her wistful eyes.

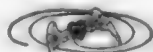
Now she was back! Suddenly he saw her at the rail, some distance back, and he restrained himself only by superhuman effort. Clad in an almond green coat which heightened the glory of her Venetian red hair, just a lock or two of which was visible beneath the chic little toque, Patricia leaned forward eagerly. She waved a trimly gloved hand as she recognized Jack. The next instant he was frantically fanning the air with his hat, as wildly as anyone on the pier.

"Well," she smiled demurely, when their hands met on the pier, "aren't you going to say anything, Jackie?"

He glanced apprehensively around him. Everyone seemed occupied with the business of greeting except a few curious onlookers, obviously attracted by Pat's ravishing beauty. Well, what did he care for them? Pat's eyes danced. The next instant she was in his arms.



THE first kiss is free. It is paid for by the last.



A STREAK of yellow—more lurid than the lightning that stormy night—and a coward's act in the agony of shipwreck. . . . There was heroism, too, much of it, but in the heart of a loyal girl on shore the facts of the case were mixed. Albert Payson Terhune tells how it was straightened out—a strong story. . . .



The Hero Worshipper

By Albert Payson Terhune

THOMAS CARLYLE was woefully ignorant about women. Men were an open book to the surly old essayist, but there was only one woman in all his grouchy life. She entered it just far enough to serve as the Party of the Second Part in a snarling matrimonial squabble and then she had the good luck to die. So Carlyle's essay on "Hero Worship," though classic as far as it goes, stops a mile short of its most vital point. The bewhiskered old Scot had not the faintest idea of a hero's physical effect on womankind. Mars Gresham had fifty times Carlyle's insight into the subject; and he paid double rates for his experience.

Mars Gresham was the type of man you will see eighty thousand times in your casual inspection of any hundred thousand people. If the Woolworth Building were to topple over into New York's City Hall Park during the crowded noon hour, there would be innumerable ambulance loads of Mars Greshams carted off in the débris.

All this is to explain that Mars Gresham bore no outward likeness to a collar advertisement or to a cave man or to a tramp or to a matinee idol or to a gladiator. He looked—well—like most men. He was just "medium average" in size and in looks and in manner. His first name was the only out-

ward symbol of individuality. If his parents had called him John instead of saddling him with his grandfather's fanciful first name, he would not have made a ripple in the flat average of life.

In brief, he would not have differed from the rank and file of us.

The dead level resemblance was heightened further by the existence of a girl he loved and a man who was his chum and a man whom he disliked most heartily and wholesomely. As with nine out of ten of us. . . .

THE girl was Sibyl Gale. The chum was Clive Blundell. The disliked man was Miller Braith.

The drama began before ever Mars happened to meet Sibyl. In other words, she and Miller Braith had known each other for nearly three months, at Watch Hill, that Summer, before Mars and Blundell arrived there together, as usual, for a brief vacation.

Gresham and Blundell met Sibyl on the Harrington's yacht-run to Block Island and New London. During the two-day cruise both youths fell in love with her. There was nothing remarkable about that. Men had a way of falling in love with Sibyl. But when they got back to Watch Hill, the two learned she had become engaged to Miller Braith a week earlier.

Now, this discovery served only to tense Mars for the contest. Always he had disliked Braith; from the time the latter was the Apollo-like baseball captain at Groton and Mars was a scrubby little boy of no distinction at the same school.

Braith had won, now, the girl with whom Mars had just discovered himself to be foolishly in love. It was Mars' first real love affair in all his twenty-six years. It had hit him all over. He was not of the type that loves easily, or who, loving, can recover from the malady. He loved Sibyl Gale. And, by dint of being on the ground three months earlier, Braith had been able to engage himself to her.

Very good. If Braith could hold her, let him do it. But Mars meant to

contest the decision. By every square means in his power he intended to try to win her away from Braith, and for himself. It meant more to Mars than anything else had meant. And he prepared for battle. . . .

Then Harrington got up a twenty-four-hour fishing trip—not on his super-elegant yacht this time but in an auxiliary-engined old tub of a schooner he had bought and refurbished.

Blundell and Gresham and Braith and a couple of other men at the country club were invited. Gresham was all for refusing. Barely ten days of his vacation remained; and he did not wish to spend any of that inch of time away from Sibyl Gale. But Sibyl and her mother were going to Narragansett over the week-end. And in the girl's absence Mars felt he would be as well off on the fishing trip as in mooning around the links at Watch Hill. Apparently Blundell and Braith felt the same way about it.

II

THERE were six in the party, beside the crew. As they rounded Point Judith at night the weather suddenly turned dirty. Harrington was at the wheel. Incidentally, he was more or less drunk. A hammer-fisted black squall smote the wallowing schooner.

Slammed against a tooth of the Jigsaw Reef, the refurbished old tub proceeded to go to pieces. This she did with a motion picture celerity. She was rotten to the very center of her ancient jerry-built keel. And the smashing waves did the rest.

Harrington found himself paddling blindly, dog-fashion, in a ragingly high midnight sea. So did two of the crew who had been washed overboard with him. All three were cast ashore eventually, somewhere below Point Judith; recognizable only by their clothes.

In the few minutes before the reeling deck separated into splinters of its component planks, Mars Gresham took charge of the situation. He did not stop to realize why he did this; nor

did the other survivors analyze their emotions in obeying his barked orders.

He worked furiously and supervised luridly to clear the debris from the one small dinghy which was swinging from the after deck; to get the frail little craft safely launched in the maelstrom of black waters; and to assign each man his place in the sadly overtaxed boat.

Somehow he accomplished all this touch-and-go labor without mishap. Then, his electric flash playing on the dinghy as he crouched clinging to a stanchion and to the schooner's submerging rail, he shouted:

"She's carrying too much weight! In a sea like this, she's due to flounder. I'm staying here on the wreck. But one more man will have to stay, too, unless you want the dinghy to fill or capsize."

He was alone on the washing decks; last of the number to leave the schooner. And his demand that one more man sacrifice chance of life by abandoning the dinghy met with a multiple glare of frozen horror from the boat's drenched occupants.

"Sit down, you fool!" bellowed Gresham. "You can't swim a stroke. The man who stays here with me has got to be a swimmer. It's his only chance. Who?"

A surge of water lifted the dinghy high in air and sent the wash swirling about Gresham's chest, all but breaking his hold on the stanchion.

"Who?" he yelled as the dinghy once more ground against the rail, pitching heavily. "Who is it to be? Quick! The rest of you will have to be out of the way before this scow goes down by the head or she'll suck you under. Who?"

Blundell was staring at Miller Braith. Gresham's gaze followed the direction of his chum's.

"You, Braith?" Gresham challenged. "You're the only athlete in the lot. You won the swimming tournament at Nar-ragansett, too, last year. How about it?"

For answer, Braith snarled like a wild beast that is tortured. He bent lower in the dinghy's watery bottom and clung to the thwarts with both hands



"One man back here with me!" thundered Mars. "Who'll it be? Who'll take a chance on a bit of wreckage with me to keep the rest from drowning? Speak up! Quick!"

Clive Blundell half arose from his seat in the bow.

as if to resist some physical effort to lift him. His lips writhed hideously in an effort to speak. He was the personification of panic terror. And at the sight Gresham was aware of a spasm of nausea. This was the pitiful cur who had won Sibyl Gale's love!

"The swine!" muttered Blundell. "Here, Mars! I was rank enough to be glad when you ordered me not to join you. But I'm not going to be in the class with this sweet soul. Trim boat, there, the rest of you! I'm going overboard."

A receding wave had brought the dinghy once more grating against the half sunken rail of the schooner. Tightening his grip on the stanchion, Gresham flung his body forward. With one vehement motion he thrust Blundell back into the bottom of the dinghy. With another, he caught Braith by the coat collar and endeavored to drag him from the dinghy seat and across the rail.

Braith screamed like a vivisectioned cat and with eel-like agility wiggled out of his coat. Then, huddling again into the bottom of the dinghy he lay there weeping and mouthing among the legs of his fellow passengers.

"No!" he screeched, his nerves in tatters. "No! No! NO!"

His shriek was merged into a gurgle. For the second squall struck. Even as the first had shattered the old schooner, so the second hurled a mountain wall of black water at the handful of humans and over the wallowing remains of the wreck.

The rest was horror.

Wholly by instinct, Gresham clung to the stanchion he held. When it and a huge mass of wood were torn free of the schooner by the second wave, he and this impromptu raft were rolled over and over in the wash and then were drawn far under water by the whirlpool of the sinking vessel.

After a thousand centuries the wood bobbed clumsily to the surface again. Half drowned and more than half stunned, Mars Gresham crawled, crab-like, aboard the swaying lump of flotsam and lay there, panting and hiccupping as he strove to maintain his balance.

Then broke the thunderstorm which followed upon the tempest's heels. By the recurrent flashes of lightning Mars blinked about him over the nearer expanse of tumbled black water.

One moment in the sea's trough and the next riding high on a wave crest, he held like grim death to his raft and sought to get sight or sign of his former comrades.

Presently something bumped heavily against his knee as his leg hung over-side. The next lightning flare revealed the capsized dinghy slapping obliquely against the raft. Hanging on to its bow thwart was a man.

Blundell, as the boat turned turtle, had grabbed the thwart which lay beneath his hand and had hung on. Battered and all but drowned, he maintained his grasp.

Gresham leaned out and with his one free hand drew his chum higher up on the overturned keel and thence to the wallowing raft. It was an effort that took all his strength. There he held the exhausted man dizzily while the thunderstorm raged above them.

Then all at once the lightning and the rain ceased. The wind, too, vanished. But for a sick groundswell, the sea lay quiet. Out from a ragged hole in the ruck of inky clouds the full moon butted her way.

At daylight a fishing smack, out of Point Judith, sighted the lump of wreckage and the two half-conscious bodies sprawling across its higher surface. A few hours later, bruised and with an abrasion or two and dull from the shock but otherwise not much the worse, Blundell and Gresham were helped up from the pier to the hotel at Watch Hill between walls of open-mouthed Summer visitors and natives.

It was not until they were alone together in the room they shared that Gresham summoned courage to say the thing that had been uppermost in his mind ever since he had found himself hanging to the wreck.

"What are we to tell—*her*?" he asked, hesitatingly.

"Tell who?" asked Blundell, his brain still thick from reaction.

"Sibyl Gale," answered Mars awkwardly. "What are we going to tell her? She mustn't know the man was

yellow to the core. She mustn't know how he behaved—out yonder. She—"

"Everybody with a set of ears is going to hear how *you* behaved," declared Blundell. "Because I'm going to tell them. The world's due to learn it's got one white man left in it. Lord, but I'll never forget the cool way you gave up your chance in the boat and the way you got the boat launched and—"

"Rot!" snapped Gresham. "I kept you people babbling there till you were swamped. A sweet mess I made of it!"

"That big second squall would have swamped us anyhow," said Blundell, "whether we'd been free of the schooner or not. You were—"

"Listen here!" commanded Gresham with an unwonted flash of temper as he stood over his chum. "Out on that raft you blithered something or other about being in my debt for yanking you to safety. It was all nonsense, of course. But we'll grant it, for the sake of argument. Now you can clear that debt in just one way—by keeping your silly mouth shut about what happened. I mean it. I was doing a bit of thinking while you were doing all that groaning. The story of the wreck isn't going to get out. Understand? In the first place, if it does we'll have questions to answer about Braith. And we'll be dead sure to blab or to give a hint of what he really did. Besides, I'm not going to pose as a dime novel hero. It'd scare me to death. I couldn't live up to it for five minutes. I—"

"But—"

"So I've thought it out. And here's the answer: Along about midnight a squall hit us. It broke up the schooner and scattered us into the drink. You and I were thrashing about in the water when we hit against that swad of wreckage. We climbed on to it and we were there till morning; and then got picked up by those fishermen. That's all there is to it. We don't know anything about the others. Get the story by heart and stick to it. The reporters will be here any time now. It's only by luck that the doctor at Point Judith had sense enough to keep people

from asking us questions. It's up to us from now on. We were knocked overboard as she broke up and we hung to that raft thing till we were rescued. Remember it."

But it was not until he had exhorted and bullied for another quarter-hour that Mars was able to extort from his chum the grudging pledge he demanded. Then, sulkily, Blundell grumbled:

"Have it your own idiotic way. But don't pat yourself on the back that you get away with that guff about not wanting to pose as a hero. By sticking to this story of yours we'll keep Sibyl Gale from finding out she was engaged to something seven miles lower than a hyena. And that's what you're trying for. I don't see why, but I'll do as you say, since you're so tactful as to go on reminding me I owe my life to you. Let it go at that. But—"

He paused for a moment, his forehead wrinkling as in some mental effort. Then he said:

"Things have been coming back to me, in queer little slices, without any sort of connection between them. For instance: I had just bumped into the bottom of the boat from that courteous shove of yours when the big wave hit us. I was lying on my back. I could see the others silhouetted against the sky just before the wave toppled down on us. The dinghy careened. Old man Fletcher was snapped out into the sea as if he had been popped from a catapult. He clawed at the side of the dinghy to lift himself aboard again. And Braith lurched forward and grabbed him by the tie and the collar and gave him an ungodly push overboard again. He—"

"No!" exclaimed Gresham, shuddering. "You must have gotten it all mixed up. More likely he reached out to pull the old fellow aboard. It—"

"Like Hell he did! I could hear Braith squeal: 'Get back! We're one man too heavy!' And then he gave him that tremendous shove. It jarred the whole boat. That was the second the wave crashed down on us and brought the world to an end. It came so sud-

denly I doubt if Braith even had time to let go of Fletcher's collar before—"

The jingle of the room telephone broke in on his disgusted recital. The first of the reporters had arrived. . . .

THE reporter, seeking news, brought news, as well. Four bodies thus far had been storm-and-tide-driven ashore along various portions of the coast. Two had been found side by side on a beach beyond Point Judith. One was that of Fletcher. The other was Miller Braith's.

In Braith's dead hand was still clutched a collar and necktie. Fletcher's tie and collar had been torn, evidently with much violence, from the old gentleman's neck.

This fact and the propinquity of the bodies told its own story, the reporter declared. Braith, an athlete and a notable swimmer, had undertaken to rescue the oldest and feeblest member of the party. He had seized Mr. Fletcher by the collar and towed him along, holding the old man's head above water, until Braith's own magnificent strength had given out. Even then he would not relinquish his life-saving hold on his friend but clutched the collar until a heavy wave jerked the linen free from Fletcher's shirt. Alone, Braith could almost certainly have kept afloat and won his way to shore. But impeded by the dead weight of the stout old man he had resolved to save, he had thrown away his own life.

It was a touch of pure heroism which made the world seem a better place to live in. The reporter said so himself. He added that it was a corking good human interest touch in the biggest story that had "broken" on the coast for a year. Braith was a while-souled hero and every paper in America was certain to immortalize him. It was worth while to die in order to gain such deathless fame.

The two friends listened in owlish silence to the rhapsody. Only once did they interrupt the glowing recital in any way. That was when Blundell's pent-up emotions found vent in a snort

which carried with it volumes of unspoken blasphemy. Gresham glowered homicidally at his chum, then nodded to the reporter to go on with his tale of heroism.

Sibyl Gale did not come back to Watch Hill from her Narragansett week-end. She had not the heart to. But she went with her mother to Point Judith and thence accompanied Miller Braith's body to New York to its hero's burial.

A week later Clive Blundell was sent to Geneva as Swiss representative of his firm. Nor did he come back to New York for the best part of a year.

III

DURING that year—indeed, during its first few months—Mars began to lay his own lines of attack. So fortunate was he that long before Sibyl came out of her self-imposed period of mourning for her hero he had established a calling acquaintance with the bereft girl.

Though she had turned her back on social life for the time, yet she welcomed the friends of the man to whom she had been engaged. And while Gresham made no claim of friendship for the dead man, yet she knew they had been schoolmates and business associates and had gone together through the frightful experience in which Braith lost his life.

At first, during this period, Gresham made no special impression on the girl he loved. She welcomed him for Miller Braith's sake. His quiet manner and lack of egotism had a soothing effect on her torn spirits. His presence soothed her and, mildly, he interested her.

She grew to looking forward to his pleasantly impersonal calls. Gradually—so gradually that she herself did not realize it—she found herself more and more interested in him, more and more relying on him. Which was the way of folk who got to knowing Mars Gresham well enough to see past his exterior.

When Sibyl and her mother went to their Summer home in Westchester

very early in the spring, they found that Gresham had taken rooms in a farmhouse a bare half-mile from their place. He said he had come out there because he could work with more concentration than in New York. And there seemed no reason to disbelieve him.

Sibyl was unaffectedly glad of his presence. She was barely twenty-one. At that age it is ever-increasingly difficult to apply oneself to the bitter-sweet task of mourning for a lost love. Least of all in the Spring and in the constant companionship of another person of like youth and unlike sex.

Through the Springtime woods strolled the mourning maid and the silently adoring swain. They climbed mountains together. Together they motored and canoed. Sibyl, in occasional spells of motherly solicitude, feared she was making Mars neglect his work. But Mars knew better. He was working as never before.

Yet in his heart of hearts he feared he was making scant progress. True, Sibyl had admitted him to a sweetly confidential friendship and was unfeignedly glad of his society. But ever he felt she was faithful in thought, as in word and deed, to Miller Braith's memory. True, Mars no longer owed his footing in her regard to the fact that he was supposed to have been Braith's dear friend.

Though Sibyl was finding it harder and harder to maintain her perpetual melancholy, yet not even the magic of youth could lure her into active infidelity to her Sacred Memory.

ALL this Mars read with perfect ease. But doggedly he adhered to his plan of campaign. Nature and Sibyl's twenty-one years and Springtime were his strong allies. But it was nature and Springtime and his own twenty-seven years which led him to break down his wisely arranged lines. It happened in this way:

One afternoon they were on the way home, across the fields, from a bracing five-mile walk. Coming to a fence between meadow and woodland, Gresham

vaulted the rails and then turned to help Sibyl. Her hand resting on his to balance her, she mounted the fence and prepared to jump down by means of the same steadying assistance.

But on the smooth top rail her slippery shoe skidded. Losing her balance, she fell forward. Mars caught her as she stumbled. For a moment she was in his arms, her face touching his.

And the mischief was done.

By no conscious volition of his own Mars Gresham tightened his clasp about her strong young body, crushing her close to his breast. And he was kissing her flushed, upturned face a score of times, wildly rapturously, panting a myriad incoherent love words.

For a long instant the girl lay thus in her lover's arms, her breath quick and uneven, her eyes star-bright and soft, her face suffused. Almost it seemed to the gloriously triumphant man that her lips returned the hot kisses he rained upon them.

Then with a little cry of horror she had torn herself free and was facing him; disheveled, pallid, her eyes wide with dismay.

"Oh!" she gasped. "What have you—what have we—done? It's—it's horrible! It's sacrilege! It's—"

"It's Heaven!" he denied, drunk with rapture. "I love you! Don't you understand, sweetheart of mine? I love you! I love you! It—"

"Hush!" she bade him, speaking with something akin to fierceness. "Hush! Oh, you've ruined everything! I'm so ashamed of myself! I—"

"I've made everything perfect!" he denied, seeking to enfold her again in his hungry arms. "And you're not 'ashamed' of yourself. We love each other; and—"

"Stop!" she insisted, shrinking back from his outstretched arms as from a leper's and hiding her face in her trembling hands. "Stop! You mustn't speak so! You have no right to! I have no right to listen to you! Oh, I must be alone till I can get my mind

clear again! Please let me go the rest of the way to the house by myself. I—"

"No," he said calmly as he moved to bar her way.

He made no effort to embrace her now, and the glow of rapture had gone from his eyes, leaving them level and determined.

"No," he repeated. "You can't go yet. Too much has happened for that; or too little. I didn't mean to say anything yet. But it has happened. And it must be finished one way or the other. I love you. I loved you the first day I met you. And I've loved you ever since.

"I shall keep on loving you," he continued, forestalling her plea for silence, "as long as I keep on living. I can't stop, any more than I can stop breathing. And now that I know you love me I'll keep up the fight for you till they carry me out of my house, feet foremost. We've come to a showdown, you and I, my sweetheart. We love each other. Nothing else matters. I know what you're thinking of and what's holding you back from the happiness God is offering us. But the living have rights as well as the dead. And—"

"Oh, I mustn't listen to you!" she murmured from behind her clenched hands. "I mustn't. I—I belong to *him*. To the man who gave his life to save life; the hero of whose love I wasn't worthy—the—"

"You weren't *worthy*?" Mars caught up her tremulous speech. "That's absurd. You're worthy—a billion times worthy—the love of every saint in the calendar! You shan't speak so of yourself. I—"

"Wait!" she commanded, letting fall her hands from her white face and turning to meet his eager gaze. "Wait. You don't understand. And I have to tell you. I'd rather be beaten than tell. But it's the only way to make you understand how—"

"If there's anything you hate to tell me," he interrupted, "don't tell it. Don't tell it, now or later. All I want

you to tell me is that you love me a little and—"

"And that is what I shall never tell you or any other man!" she burst forth. "But I *must* tell you why I said I was unworthy of—of Miller Braith. Listen: He and I became engaged up there at Watch Hill. I drifted into the engagement, I suppose. There was so much moonlight and so much music—and he was so popular and so many girls were crazy about him and—"

"I know," assented Gresham, his lips tightening.

"We became engaged," she went on, trying not to let her sweet voice falter. "And right away I felt I had made a mistake and that I didn't care for him the way I ought to care for a man I was going to marry. And I was miserable. I was ever and ever so unhappy. So I got mother to accept that Narragansett invitation. I wanted to be away from him for a few days—to—to think things over and get my bearings. And that first night at Narragansett I couldn't sleep. All at once it seemed to me I just *couldn't* marry him. And I got up and wrote him a long letter telling him so. It was a horrid letter. But I meant it all. Or I thought then I did. And in the morning—it was awfully late, for I overslept when I got to sleep at last—I went down to the hotel desk to mail the letter to him. And before I got to the desk everyone was talking about the—what had happened. You and Mr. Blundell had just been picked up. There had been a telegram from Point Judith. And—and I had been going to send that letter to—to a man who was dying, to save others, at the very time I was writing it! There! I've told you! And now you see why I can't marry you or any other man. I—"

"No, I don't!" he denied. "I'm blest if I do. I don't see anything of the sort."

"Don't you see?" she went on, half weeping. "Don't you see? While I was being untrue to him—while I was writing to break off our engagement—at that very moment he was not only

drowning, but he was throwing away his splendid life to save someone else! He loved me. And he died in performing a heroic deed that would make any woman proud of him. And all the time I wasn't worthy of it. If he could die like that, then the very least I can do, in atonement, is to be true to his memory as long as I live. It's so clear! The road to duty is always clear."

"It is not!" angrily denied Mars. "The road to duty is the most twisted blind alley ever laid out. It's only the road to senseless self-sacrifice that is always clear and lined with will-o'-the-wisp signal lights. Dear heart, you're letting yourself be blinded by a crazy idea of atonement for something that never needed to be atoned for. And you're doing your best to throw away our happiness for the sake of it."

"If he threw away his life for another," she said softly, "it is such a little thing for me to throw away my selfish happiness and—"

"And mine along with it?" he amended.

"I see I can't make you understand even yet," she replied, once more mistress of her emotions and her voice. "But it is true nevertheless. Won't you let us forget what's just happened and be good friends? *Please?*"

"No," he made stubborn answer. "I won't. We love each other. And I'm going to make you marry me if it takes a lifetime for me to do it."

"Then," she returned, nettled by his masterful tone, "I think it will be much the best for us not to see each other any more. I'm sorry. Good-by."

She hurried away homeward through the woods. Mars Gresham made no effort to follow her. He had sense enough to know that, for the time, it would be of no use. He had seized the psychological moment. And it had been wrested from him—wrested from his enraptured grasp by the ghost of a man who had died as a self-respecting skunk would be ashamed to die. . . .

INTO his mental vision came a picture of Miller Braith's panic-twisted

face as he had shrunk screeching away from the prospect of sharing Mars's fate aboard the sinking schooner. It was the memory of a coward like that which barred Gresham from life happiness!

"She loves me!" Mars heard himself muttering, under his breath? "She loves me. And she says herself she never loved him. But she's worshiping the spirit of a hero! A hero! Lord! As long as she remembers him as a hero no one else has a chance. And—and I can't tell her what he really was. A white man *can't*. What in blue blazes is there to do? In ten minutes I've thrown away the upbuilding of ten months! I—I can't fight a ghost!"

Still doggedly determined he called at the Gale place the next afternoon, having given Sibyl a full twenty-four hours for reflection. This delay had seemed good tactics to Mars. But when he arrived at the house he found servants busily packing trunks and putting the rooms to rights for a long vacancy.

The housekeeper told him Mrs. Gale and Sibyl had decided somewhat suddenly to go back to their apartment in New York and thence to the seaside.

Two hours later Mars was at the Gales' city apartment. A hall boy told him the two women had stopped there only long enough to pack a few things and had then been driven to the Grand Central Station.

As he plodded wearily away, Mars reconstructed in his mind the reason for this flight. He visualized Sibyl's helpless struggle against her heart and her sudden resolve to flee temptation by persuading her mother to take her to some distant place for a month or so, where she would be out of the reach of Gresham's presence and influence. Once more the ghost of Miller Braith had scored.

Taking what heart he might from this sign that she cared too much for him to risk another meeting, the man gave up the fight. He did not abandon the campaign. Yet he felt that for the moment he could do no more. And recalling the stricken look in Sibyl's

face, he dreaded to cause her needless torture by pressing his forlorn hope.

IV

LOUNGING gloomily into his nearest club he met Clive Blundell coming down its steps. Blundell had landed from Europe only that afternoon and had been searching Mars's wonted haunts for a glimpse of his chum.

"I'm sick of foreign cooking and foreign scenery," Clive confided to the glum Gresham at dinner that night. "And I'm dead tired of foreign languages and foreign faces. And I'm tired of all of work. I'm going away somewhere and loaf for a month. Come along."

"I can't," responded Mars. "I took my vacation early this year. I'm just back from it. Tomorrow I've got to get down to work."

"You look all in," commented Blundell. "More as if you'd come from a hospital than from a vacation. Oh, come along up into the country somewhere and let's loaf!"

"Sorry. I can't. My work's gone to pieces. I've got to start things all over again. Good time to you, wherever you decide to go."

Next morning Blundell betook himself, bag and baggage, to the Maine coast. And for three weeks Mars heard nothing from him. Immersed in his own duties, and trying to forget that his heart was sore and heavy, Gresham thought little of his chum's failure to write. Blundell was a wretched correspondent at best. Then, on the twenty-second day, came Clive's letter. It was unduly long for a man who hated writing as did he. Yet few words in it were wasted.

"Dear Old Man," read Mars. "After you went home, the night we dined together, I hung around the club for a while. Pieters happened in. He told me he had met Sibyl Dale and her mother at the Grand Central in the afternoon; and her mother had told him they were off to York Harbor for a few weeks. That was enough for me. I hadn't cared where I went for a vacation. So I went there.

"Of course we never talked about it, you and I. But I think you knew I was hard hit when I found Sibyl was engaged to Braith. As hard hit as I knew you were. But since you didn't say anything about it when I met you last month, I gathered you'd got over it. I didn't come up to York Harbor to cut you out. I don't think I need to tell you that. But—well, all this past year I'd never been able to get her out of my mind. That being the kind of girl she is.

"So I came here. I stopped at the same hotel with her and Mrs. Gale. I didn't waste any time. It was a whirlwind three weeks. This evening—I'm writing in my room, late—I asked her to marry me.

"She told me, very gently, that she didn't care anything about me. I was bromidic enough to ask if there was someone else. She said there was; but she said she could never marry him either. I asked why. She told me. All on account of the unspeakable Braith's hero stuff. Then I asked her who the other man was. At first she wouldn't tell me. Then she broke down and cried and told me the whole story. I suppose it was a relief to her to tell it to someone—even to a dab like me.

"Then I did what I like to think is my first rotten deed in a long time. If she had cared for me I wouldn't have wrecked her fool faith in that coward. But it was you she cared for. And I figured I'd be doing a dirtier trick to my best friend by keeping my mouth shut than to Braith's memory by blabbing.

"So I blabbed.

"And I sure blabbed good and plenty. We were in a motor boat a mile from shore or I honestly believe she'd have walked out on me before I was half through. At first she acted as if I was committing a sacrilege. But I made her listen. She'll hate me for it always. *But I made her listen.* And I did more. Before I was through I made her believe me.

"I told her every tiny detail of Braith's hideous yellowness; and I played it up strong. And I told her every detail of your whiteness that night, and I played that up stronger. Then I told her what I thought of you for being too big to smash her idol in order to get your own happiness. For good measure I threw in that unsavory yarn about Braith and the little Vardley girl. Oh, I was a beast! I went the limit.

"By and by she got to crying, very softly, like a heartbroken little child. Then I knew you'd won.

"I had a guilty feeling, as if I had killed something. But the thing I had killed was Miller Braith's ghost. And that's nothing to feel guilty over. Especially as that same ghost has been spending the past year killing your happiness and—and hers.

"I took her ashore, and I came upstairs to write this.

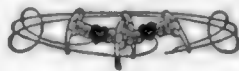
"Mars, something tells me I won't be a very welcome guest in your home. But anyhow you're going to have a home. And a wife in it. The wonderfulest wife ever! But for me, you wouldn't have one. So—well, I guess the job was worth it."

LONG and dazedly Gresham sat at his corner table at the club while his breakfast grew cold and greasy in front of him. Long and dazedly he stared at the letter. Then through his bemused consciousness came the droning voice of a page:

"Tel'gram for Mr. Mars Gresham! Tel'gram for Mr. Mars Gresham!"

The page caught sight of Mars slumping over his table and bore the dispatch across the breakfast room to him. Still in that queer daze, Gresham tore open the envelope, and read:

"We are at York Harbor. Can't you please come up here, right away? There's something I have to tell you—something terribly important—and it really ought not to wait.—SIBYL."



Wrong Again

By Mary Carolyn Davies

A DAY, we said, an hour, we said,
And love will lose its power, we said.
So let's be gay today, today.
Our love—tomorrow—will be dead.

Let's kiss, we said, like this, we said;
Beneath the golden moon, we said.
Let's laugh and sing, and have our fling,
For love will go so soon, we said.

We'd heard of love, we'd read of love;
We knew what men had said of love.



WHEN a man has been married five years he should show, if he amounts to anything at all, the makings of a good bachelor.



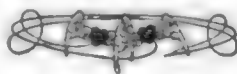
LOVE: A parade that takes a lifetime to pass a given point.



A Few Things I Miss

By Charles G. Shaw

THE Maxfield Parrish panel of Old King Cole in the bar of the Hotel Knickerbocker . . . the free lunch at the Manhattan . . . the escargots de Boulagier at Martin's . . . the welsh rabbits at the Grand Union Hotel . . . the girl behind the cigar counter at the Hoffman House . . . the café of the Belvedere . . . the steamed oysters at the Bartholdi in Twenty-third Street . . . Weber and Field's burlesques . . . the Manhattan cocktails at the Holland House . . . the Münchener at Lüchow's . . . the hack-stand in Madison Square . . . the palm trees in the Dome Room of the Arena . . . Tony Pastor's . . . the chess automaton at the Eden Musée . . . the Saratoga chips on the bar at Sherry's . . . the head porter at the St. Nicholas Hotel . . . the lunch-wagons in Union Square . . . the first nights at the Academy of Music . . . the club-sandwiches at the Fifth Avenue Hotel . . . the dollar table d'hôtes at Gazzo's . . . the breakfasts at Jack's at five in the morning . . . the hurdy-gurdy that used to play: "In the Good Old Summer Time."



Wishes

By Arthur Wallace Peach

SO much of beauty in the world
I know I shall not see,
I ask the beauty of your eyes
To comfort me.

So much of song must ever pass
To silence, hushed, unheard,
I long to hear your lips repeat
Each tender word.

The cloister halls of peace are far
From sounding street and mart,
Grant me the peace of quiet walks
Within your heart!



A sensitive chronicle of the inner life of a charming young girl.

The Diary. of A YOUNG GIRL

Revised and Edited

By Helen Woljeska



Madame Woljeska has been one of SMART SET's most esteemed contributors for ten years. Her work has always been sophisticated, brilliant, delightfully Continental, and feminine. . . .

FRIDAY, January 7th. Yesterday I met Ben's wife. She is very pretty. I like her. There was a time when I thought I myself was in love with Ben; and when he went off to Paris—and when I heard he had become engaged there—I felt my heart must break. But that was before I knew the *Bienaimé*. How much has happened to me since, how much great bliss and still greater grief I've known! I can scarcely believe it's only two years ago.

Monday, January 10th. I had a lovely time with Ben and Liane in their little flat. A "*souper à trois*," lots of red wine and cigarettes. Afterwards Ben played the banjo, and we two sat on the couch with dishevelled locks and were "his harem." Liane made up my eyes for me in true Parisian style. It quite changed my expression, made me look vampish. I loved it. But Ben did not approve!

I really like Liane very much. She has such foreign charm. Compared to other girls she seems like champagne compared to ice cream soda. She's so beautiful, artistic, free, daring—yet one feels that underneath all these sparkling qualities she is loyal and straight and true.

She says I look like a Rossetti woman, and wants to paint me. I am to be her second Wanda. She said: "I will adopt you—will you adopt me?"

It was amusing to watch her tease

the dignified Ben, scold, pout, order him around, but all so piquantly and playfully that he could not help but enjoy it. When once she does abandon herself in tenderness, the contrast must be ravishing. This is what my *Bienaimé* no doubt always missed in me. I could not tease. I was always the adoring slave. No wonder he grew bored. . . .

January 11th. This afternoon Robbie Kossack brought Will Wilson and Gogo to my studio, to inspect the portrait I am doing of him. We had a very jolly, congenial time, and they loved the painting. It really is coming along wonderfully well. I adore painting in oil. One can put all one's dreams and thrills into those gorgeous jumbles of brooding or flaming colors and strangely interlaced lines. To paint intoxicates me. It is my vice. Unfortunately it is the horrible, commercial fashion work that pays.

January 12th. When I am with others, or deeply in my work, I can be happy, and very gay. But when I'm alone with my thoughts! Then I see frightfully clear that my life's practically ended, spoilt, done for; that all dreams of love and happiness must be abandoned. It is a dreadful feeling, and makes my heart stand still with terror.

Of course I don't mean my life is spoilt because I no longer can be easily pigeonholed into one or the other com-

partment of conventionality. That troubles me not at all. I never wanted to be married. And since I can support myself, I don't *have* to marry—thank Heaven! What I mean is, that my joy of life is gone forever, yes, and the flower of it frozen before it was quite opened—because I'll never again be able to have faith in love.

January 13th. My mother does not approve of Liane! Ha! I do not approve of my mother! I hate our home. I loathe family life. I am only happy away from it all, here, in my own little studio—which has seen all my joys and tears.

January 15th. I still love him—I know it, I know it! Perhaps I shall always love him, always long for him? How unthinkably dreadful that would be! Oh *Bienaimé—je t'aime—je t'aime!*

At Night. I should like to pray. I should like to speak with the great soul of the world, to make clear to myself my relations to IT, my attitude to life. What, really, do I want to do with my life? What might satisfy me on looking back at death? I think I want to bring myself, both body and soul, up to an idea or ideal I carry somewhere within me. And to do that, I'll have to learn to win something great and deep even out of my sorrows. I feel it all very dimly and chaotically. Oh, I should like to pray. . . . If only I could believe there is a God to hear.

But, even so, I want to live so I can be proud of myself, admire my own prowess and beauty! If neither God nor man cares—I *still do!* I want to live like a free spirit, do everything which, deep down in my heart, I feel I ought to do, no matter how bad or mad it may seem to others. Is not that what Socrates meant when he said we should follow our Daimon?

Monday, January 17th. This afternoon while I posed for Liane we were talking of men. She said: "You must beat a man if you want him to kiss you. If you kiss him, he will beat you!" She is so worldly wise! What a little dummy I am compared to her! I always tried my best to make the *Bien-*

aimé understand he could count upon me absolutely. No doubt, that lacked fascination. But—it is natural to me—my Daimon. What is the good of a love which you cannot keep when you are your true self? Even for him I would not lower myself into wearing a mask. No. If you don't like my essence go! Go—*mon Bienaimé!*

Liane does not know what jealousy is. She says: "I always tell Ben to have other women. But he won't. He flirts a little now and then. But that's as far as it goes. . . ." No wonder—she is so ravishing, how *could* he want another?

She is only twenty-four, but she knows so much! She says she feels old enough to be my mother, and I believe it. When I spoke of becoming a great and free woman, she smiled. "You are so full of illusions," she said, "it is quaint and refreshing. But when you know more about life you will realize that the most advanced modern ideas cannot save a woman of your temperament. You will always have all the instincts of the primitive female. Freedom—! To you it must remain an empty word. For with all your senses, with your whole soul, you desire to be the slave of the man you love. And when your lover crushes your heart under his foot, you will kiss his foot, and cry: 'More!'" How strange that she should say this! Is she perhaps right?

"But you?" I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, I never was meant to be a *grande amoureuse!* My eyes were opened early. And the moment a woman realizes that she might be just as happy with any number of other men—that moment man's power over her is broken, and she can afford to be critical, and exacting, and truly independent. That's why men make such a fetish of virginity, you see—women who haven't been loved before are so much more easily duped."

Jendredi, vingt janvier. Ben and Liane came to have supper with me, here in my studio. Or, to be exact, they

brought the supper, and I made some tea on my little one-burner gas stove. Liane loved the place, and thinks my paintings "ripping" and "épatant!" The commercial work I do for Mr. Ball she can, of course, not like—neither can I.

After supper Ben went off to teach night school, and we two girls stayed together. And then—I told her about the *Bienaimé*! It was the first time I had spoken of our love to any soul, but I did not have to regret it. How she understood! How she sees both of us just the way I feel we are! How she spared me any criticism of him, and pity for me! She realizes it was a natural episode. "That is how things happen," she said, "*c'est la vie!*" How refreshing! How different from what my mother would say if she knew . . .!

Liane is a darling. I can never look at her enough. Every pose and expression shows a new beauty, everything she says and how she says it is a pleasure to hear.

When Ben came back we all departed for their flat, where I was to spend the night with them. There she and I took off our dresses, let down our hair, put on peignoirs, and painted our faces. We drank black coffee and smoked cigarettes until about one.

Ben slept on the couch in their front room which Liane uses as a studio. She and I slept in the big bed. And there, suddenly, I grew desperately, heartbreaking, homesick for the *Bienaimé*! Oh, God—why was it all over so quickly? Why did you allow it to go to pieces so soon? Other people's happiness seems to last—why not mine?

January 26th. I feel as though I were at a feast which is going to last much, much longer—although I already am through with my dessert. All I can expect now is, to be an onlooker. . . .

Still, my adored *Bienaimé*, if it had not been for you I might never have had any dessert at all! Many women have to spend their whole lives without it.

It was wonderful while it lasted. . . . *Pourtant, je souffre bien!*

Sunday Morning, January 30th. Scotty called at the studio yesterday. He brought a can of asparagus tips and made a divine cream soup for luncheon. He is an excellent cook—also a queer little man. There is something unnatural, eerie, about him—sometimes I think he is not quite human, half imp in fact. There certainly is a dash of malevolence mixed with the friendliness of his nature. He was so visibly pleased to tell me he had met the *Bienaimé* on Fifth Avenue, walking with Mabel. Oh, if he had seen my pillow this morning, he could have been satisfied.

Tuesday, February 1st. Liane and Ben had a party last night. Outside of me only men were invited. There were Percy Ione, Edgar Floy-Jones, Andy Lynn, Charley Brock, Robby Kossack and Mr. Keller, also a man I hadn't known before, Adolphe Scullen, handsome, but, somehow, not *simpatico*. I had a wonderful time! It was Parisian and demi-mondain. Liane and I had very little on. The men, all *viveurs*, wore dinner jackets and shining pumps; they had pale, well-groomed hands and insinuatingly knowing faces. They all crowded around me. And when Liane made me let down my long red hair they applauded, touched it, held it to their cheeks and lips. *C'était rigolo!* If I can have enough pleasures of this kind, perhaps I'll be able to do without love. Perhaps!

February 3rd. I've just heard some wisdom from the dead lips of my friend Epictetus, then had a cigarette on the divan. . . .

I love Epictetus' views. Still, I can never quite accept them. A real Stoic cares for nothing except the things within the power of his will. He does not know grief. But neither does he know rapture! His happiness is the absence of unhappiness. Oh, but I want both, grief and joy, I want to live fully and deeply! Only—I'll be a sort of modified Stoic. I'll examine things. And only if I find they

are worth their price of sorrows, will I accept them. Love, for instance. . . .

Monday, February 7th. Their dear little new nest! It is above a flower shop, in a small red-brick house just off Washington Square. Like a doll's house! The studio with its wide bay window, the sunny bedroom, the snow white bath, the kitchen with its door to a back porch which leads into a sort of tiny garden—it could not possibly be more adorable! And the whole place is filled with the perfume of flowers and the smell of damp, fertile earth from the shop below. Oh, how happy I would be, if this were mine and the *Bienaimé's*! So happy—so happy—I really think I would have to die with happiness.

Ben and Liane don't seem to appreciate it half enough—nor each other, for that matter. Perhaps they were irritable on account of the moving. Anyway, the teasings lately had a sharp edge to them, and Ben's replies were not any too gentle either. Today Liane grew so angry, that she threw a plate at him. He looked at her with an expression of rage and contempt which really frightened me—as though he would delight in killing her! Then he said icily: "I wish you'd keep these exhibitions of ill-breeding until we are alone—remember, Madge comes from a refined home!" Then he left. I felt dreadful, both for him and for Liane. She began to cry so piteously, after we heard the house door bang! I tried my best to console her.

February 15th. Frankly, I don't feel a bit eager to fight the battle of life. It really is a battle, one struggle right after another. And if you don't enjoy fighting it were much better not to have been born. I would so much rather lie quietly dead somewhere! Still, I'm not ready for death either. Somehow, in a queerly dim way, I feel that I must stay to accomplish something wonderful. Perhaps to develop a soul? I would like to know if this is a subconscious truth of mine—or the result of early teachings? It may be only a will-

of-the-wisp. Still, there's nothing to do but follow it.

Friday, February 18th. Had a simply superb time last night at the housewarming. Felt like drunk with champagne—do still, in fact! I looked pretty, in black velvet with a deep red rose next to my bare white shoulder—quite the prettiest girl there, excepting, of course, Liane. There always were two, three, and four men around me; and they were not art school kids but real men of the world, tall, slender, pale, with long, caressing hands and knowing eyes. Mr. Brock was there, and Paul Grether, my hammock man of two years ago. Handsome—very! Firm lips, good chin, fine Roman nose, dark, bright eyes. . . . Two years ago! The time I was in love with Ben! How distant all that seems! Really, sixteen is further removed from eighteen, than eighteen from forty! Mr. Floy-Jones, the old *viveur*, bent over me while he talked to breathe my skin. Little Andy Lynn looked at me like Gecko at Trilby. Robbie was handsomer than ever. Then there were Percy Ione, Will Wilson, Mr. Wright, Cecil, Gogo, Louie-sweet-and-dear, Charley Barbour, Mr. Saunders, who had his moustache shaved off and looks stunningly brutal; Will Hurlbut with his high black satin stock and mop of blond hair, and cute little Hinkley. Adolphe Scullen looked as fascinating as ever, but I can't bear his hard and arrogant eyes.

Tuesday, March 1st. I spent yesterday with Liane. Ben was on one of his tiresome business trips to Chicago. We two girls had such a congenial time together. She worked on that picture of me. I love the way she sees me—it's very unusual. Afterwards we sewed. I never cared to sew before she initiated me into its delicate joys. Now I "create" lingerie and negligées, just as I do sketches—it satisfies quite the same cravings. Dressing one's self is such fun!

I always like my outside clothes dark and simple. But for my undies I choose any color, from apricot to turquoise and from reseda to lavender, not forgetting

white and black. And all kinds of materials from batiste to georgette. An infinite variety. Only one rule I uphold with Chinese rigidity—my garters must always be of green silk! I don't know why. But this is how it must be. It's one of those queer laws each person carries in the subconsciousness, but usually leaves there. . . . I love to unearth my laws, in both big and little things. And then I obey them. Liane says she wishes more people wore green garters.

We went to bed early. But we didn't sleep. In the solitude, darkness and warmth, with our bodies so close, we became very unreserved with each other, forgot all our inhibitions and restraints, and spoke of things we never had dreamed of mentioning before. She told me of her childhood in her mother's London studio, of her girlhood in her own studio in Paris. All she had gone through, ever since she was a little girl of nine or ten! Horrible! But she has come out of all this corruption and sorrow unspoiled and unwarped. Only a little wayward note is added to her beauty, which makes it all the more irresistible. Surely one must forgive if sometimes she loses her self-control; one can only admire that she usually is so charming and well balanced. Anyway, I would not have her different. No matter what formed her—the final result is wonderful, she is one in thousands! And Ben deserves her. He is so dear and strong and true and gentle and manly and loving. . . . I sometimes wish the *Bienaimé* had been just a little bit like him. . . .

Friday, March 4th. Un jour excitant—à la fin triste. . . . Nothing but callers at my studio, all day—one man after another: Robbie, Wilson, Louis, Gogo, Scotty. Ah—*je suis fatiguée*. So much conversation wears me out.

We discussed love. Wilson said: "The best cure for love is to look at the person's faults. And everybody has faults. . . ." "That's just it," I said, "and, unfortunately, one may prefer one person's faults to another's perfections!" He grinned. "That sounds too

much like an epigram to be true." "It is true all the same!"

Robbie stayed last. He is very fond of me. But I? Why am I not just as fond of him? Why do I have to grieve a dear, congenial, handsome, brainy, devoted man by not being able to love him? Do I still love the *Bienaimé*? It almost seems like heresy to put such a question. Still, sometimes, lately, it has seemed to me as though his picture were growing shadowy in my heart, and my grief less acute. . . . This happened since Ben has returned, and I see so much of Liane. She has loved and lost, and loved and lost, over and over again, and still retains her beautiful, ravishing self unimpaired. That is a stimulating and inspiring example.

Wednesday, March 9th. I am restless and frightfully bored. Art is absolutely without interest, books are bores, friends jar and blunder! The only thing that braces me up a little is the fact that I am pretty. A look in the mirror always gives me new strength and the will to live. Yes—when all is said and done I find that nothing matters except my own beauty, visible as well as invisible.

Tuesday morning, March 15th. It is a lovely, lovely morning. There was a storm in the night, a real spring storm, with rain, thunder and lightning. Now the raindrops still hang at the window-pane like tears. But the sky is blue, with little white clouds, all sunny and smiling. I think nature is very good to us by being so lovely. She alone ought to be enough to make us contented and happy. She is always there to give us her rich stimulation—she doesn't forsake us, no matter how we look and what we do. That's probably why we don't appreciate her.

Wednesday, March 16th. To do a thing well myself, that's all I need bother about. Others may arrange their acts from their own standpoints, it does not concern me. The *Bienaimé* may have acted with or without the consent of his real self—it is *his* affair. How I bear up—that again is *mine*. I will always do my best, simply for my own satisfac-

tion, so I can admire my resources and undaunted spirit. I don't want to be a tragic object of pity. *C'est tout.*

I sometimes wonder, if I met him now and judged him as an unbiased stranger—would he seem vulgar, heavy, slow, of few ideas and lacking real refinements . . . ? Oh! I am disloyal. How can I write down such cold, ugly thoughts? Do I not love him any more? And why? Do I love someone else? No, no, no!

But . . . even if I did! That would be no reason for becoming such a hostile critic. Could I ever forget the wonderful times when he was most openly himself, when he exulted with joy of me, when we were truly and deeply one? No matter what happens—these things can never be undone!

Friday, March 18th. Perhaps it is true that there is a war between the sexes. What of it? If I love, I like to be overpowered, taken prisoner by the beloved. And he, if he does *not* "love," he will relish reducing me to slavery, and then off to new victories! That wonderful mutual love girls dream of is too heavenly a thing to ever become true. We poor ones have such ecstatic ideas! And then someone who knows comes along and tells us that love is merely a physical necessity, which one man can satisfy as well as another. . . . But I do not want to believe this, even if everyone else in the world does. No! To me love will always be something mysterious and holy.

Friday, April 1st. When I have my hair all in wild curls, that's a sign that I feel gay, mad, *étourdie*. When I wear it like a smooth, shining turban à la Gloria Swanson, I feel like a temptress, subtle and dangerous. But when I wear it à la *Madone*—then I want to melt away, to swoon, to sacrifice myself for a great love. *Eh bien*—today I have it all in curls—and, since it's the first of April this is quite appropriate. . . . I've written a letter to . . .

April 3rd. There is one great question I should like to have solved. So far I have not found the answer in my subconsciousness, which knows so many

things. Perhaps I did not dig deep enough? It is this: Would it be right to kill a love when it no longer gives bliss, when it has all turned to sorrow? This love came to me, somehow, from somewhere, nobody knows! Is it not like a little ghost child, to be cherished and nursed, so it may stay alive as long as possible? Might it not be needed some day? Might *he* not be in need of it some day and come to me for it? Who can tell. . . .

April 7th. The *Bienaimé* never answered that ridiculous letter of mine. I quite needlessly made a fool of myself, for I feel clearly now that I would not even *want* him back! And I will no longer call him by that dear name—he is no longer that to me. I no longer have a *Bienaimé*.

April 10th. Supper party at Liane and Ben's last night. My portrait is finished, and was exhibited for admiration. Again there were only men, outside of Liane and myself. The usual crowd. Still, from the very first a shadow seemed to hang over it all. The gaiety had a false note to it, as though it were feverishly exaggerated. Ben was depressed. And Liane—for the first time since I knew her, I did not like Liane. I really can't say why. I imagined that her beautiful, slightly tilted eyes glinted with mocking insolence whenever she looked at me. Still, in her words and acts she was as devoted as ever.

Toward midnight she raised her glass.

"I have a surprise in store for you all!" she cried with her vibrant, bacchantic voice, "a surprise for you all!"

Ben turned very pale.

"Liane," he said, menacingly, "I have asked you to give up this mad idea of yours. . . ."

Slowly she faced him. Her eyes were defiant under their heavily beaded lashes, her mouth was red and damp and mocking, she looked gloriously ruthless.

"My poor dear!" she drawled. "If I were to give up everything you ask me to, my life would be about as colorful as that of your dear mother and sister!"

She laughed. And the men joined in a derisive chorus.

Ben shrugged his shoulders.

"If it gives you such exquisite thrills to show off your body before a lot of men—go ahead!" He sneered.

For a moment it seemed that she would spring at him. But she collected herself, shook off her rage, and swept from him with infinite disdain in every movement. Then she faced her guests.

"You must all stay in this room now and wait," she said with forced gaiety. "In about five minutes someone shall start the 'Orientale' record. Then—you'll see!"

Off she ran into the bedroom, locking the door behind her.

There was an awkward pause.

Then Scullen, who evidently was in the secret, lit some shaded candles and snatched off the electric lights. The studio was in magic chiaroscuro now, the clouds of cigarette smoke floated through it like heavy incense.

Delicately the first faint tones of the "Orientale" pierced the almost ominous silence.

The door swung open.

A glittering vision slowly, sinuously advanced into the room.

At first I could not make her out at all. From head to foot she was shrouded in silken, spangled draperies. Then I saw the flash of burning eyes, the graceful twinkle of bare ankles, the languorous movement of bracelet-covered arms.

Liane was dancing.

She danced slowly, rhythmically. Her arms, her shoulders, her hips were swaying, bending, twisting, as in an agony of longing, an ecstasy of emotion impossible to bear. And as she strained and recoiled, stretched and turned, one veil after the other loosened itself and fell to the floor in a limp little heap. Finally she stood completely revealed, her slender beauty glimmering in jade-green silk. Oh! she was beautiful!

At that moment someone changed the plaintive Cui record for a violent jazz. With a wild cry of joy Liane leapt from the pile of silken draperies at her feet and ran toward the group of her spectators, who, dark, breathless, hot-eyed,

were watching her every move. Seizing Scullen's arm, she pulled him to herself. And together the man in evening clothes and the jade-green naiad began to gyrate and writhe through the colorful dimness. It was a wonderful, exciting sight. A *brouhaha* of frenzied noises filled the room. The men stamped their feet, clapped their hands, bellowed—

And I?

I had been swept away as much as they. The Madge I imagined to be had completely disappeared, been extinguished, annihilated. In her place was an intoxicated, barbaric creature, throbbing, weeping, laughing, kissed by six men at once. . . .

The sound of a heavy door being furiously banged brought me back to myself with a start. Intuitively I realized that Ben had left the house; and I was completely sobered. My impulse was to go also, immediately. But the drunken men who held me had no intention of letting me. And my escort, Fred Hinkley, lay on the floor, fast asleep. I wanted to appeal to Liane. Had she not been standing near me only a moment ago? But mysteriously she must have vanished. She was nowhere to be seen.

I began to feel frightened. The fantastic play had suddenly turned into crude reality; these well-known, charming men into senseless, hungry brutes. All my agility and alertness were needed to outwit them, make my escape.

Off I darted toward the bedroom to get my coat and hat. For I was determined to go home without escort, rather than stay here any longer.

The door was partly ajar. Hurriedly I pushed it open. I entered. Then I stood spellbound. By the soft light of a shaded lamp I saw— Oh, I cannot write what I saw.

My heart stopped beating. I wanted to cry out, but no sound passed my lips. Then a horrible grief swept over me like icy waves, and thick tears gushed from my eyes. Poor Ben! Oh! Poor Ben!

How I managed to get home, I'll never know. . . .

April 17th. These last days have

been lonely, lonely! I must never, never see them any more, now that I am an accomplice. And Liane meant so much in my life! Without her it seems almost unbearable. I am all broken up.

April 20th. I had such an abominable night. The sorest sore throat. And a headache. And a cough that seemed to tear my lungs. And I was so hot. And my feet were so cold. And it rained. And now it still is raining. And it is cold and windy and grey and ugly. And I am disgusted with life. And I want to be happy. And I don't know how. . . .

April 29th. Late yesterday. Just as I was going to leave my studio to go home, there was a knock at my door.

I opened.

Ben stood before me!

He looked haggard, white, ghastly.

"Ben!" I cried.

He put his arms around me, and bent his face to mine. "Madge," he murmured, and his voice sounded almost as though it had tears in it, "I've made such a mistake. . . . I should never.

. . . . Madge—do you still love me a little?"

"You are my best friend . . ." I stammered, completely bewildered.

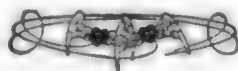
"Come, sit down beside me, and try to understand. I must talk to you—"

Then he told me many things.

And while we sat there, close together, in dearest communion, the atrocious grief that had been clutching me for the last weeks suddenly and completely disappeared. A great light burst upon me. How blind I had been, how unconscious of my own heart! . . .

Now the whole world, everything is changed for me. . . .

Now I know who truly is my *Bienaimé*.



Critique of Pure Reason

By H. Nelson

BETWEEN her rhythmical fingers a cigarette fumed drowsily. Half full, a tremulous cocktail glass shimmered on the taboret at her side. As I approached the divan on which she was calmly coiled, she glanced at me, her eyes glowing with a sleepy sort of amusement. I felt instinctively that she was dangerous—dangerous and cruel. Reason prompted me to avoid her opiate influence and mesmeric voice. She was wise, I knew, relentless and insatiable. Lovely as she might be, hers was the beauty of the glistening dagger. The glowing death of the nightshade breathed from her fine, pale skin. I repeated to myself that if I were wise I would go.

Strangely enough, I remained much longer than I should have expected.



SURELY, any beautiful woman is as dazzling as a dream. And, usually, quite as absurd.



BIBI—with the red mouth and scented fingertips—
vivacious daughter of luxury before the crash of world events. . . .
Then BIBI—still the Countess BIBI—
fighting for life in a distorted world. . . .

Countess Bibi

By Maddy Vegtel

a writer
new to the
American public,
relates how the
high-bred coquette
solved her problem.

WANTED: A young woman of refinement, as companion in Dutch family living on country estate.

WHEN, one evening not many years ago, Bibi was born, someone, somewhere in the house gingerly played a Valse, and a voice sang about "The Beautiful Blue Danube." And the mother, exhausted and pitifully pale, thought of that river—smiled and shut her eyes.

Outside, the green Isar leaped and rushed.

And in the middle of the town a sweet-faced Madonna-with-child looked at the fingers of a clock pointing to half-past eleven. . . .

Undeniably, the most charming thing about Bibi, later, was the way she—but only for a moment—crinkled up her shoulders when she laughed. Besides that, her silky flax-white hair and her slim sensitive legs—these were charming, too.

She was "tres femme," very small, very slim, with blue eyes and a soft pink mouth.

She loved everybody and she loved no one; she pleased, she scolded, she crinkled up her shoulders, she cocked her head on one side, she rouged her mouth and scented her fingertips, she danced every single dance—simple or complicated—she knew everybody, she played tennis, she rode horseback, she

spoke French and English. She did every single thing and loved it all. . . .

When the November Revolution in 1918 broke out, she was barely eighteen and had been in love, "Ah, so many times!"

After that November, Bibi's life changed, there was no more dancing, no more nice little dinners with an opera after, no more new frocks—instead of that, "Mark Bread" and "Mals Kaffee" (which isn't much like *real* coffee) and dreary afternoons at home with a grumpy father and depressing newspapers.

When, in the early spring an American family with two daughters came to look at the flat, and rented most of it, the "Mals Kaffee" disappeared for a short time.

Bibi went to the shops in the *Theaterinstrasse* and bought herself a new jumper (lavender blue), a new tam (lavender blue), a cambric-and-valenciennes blouse and a bottle of "Khasana" perfume, had a severe scolding about her extreme extravagance, but nevertheless felt herself the better for it.

The two American girls, just arrived from Paris, with their capes and *trotteuses* (Elaine et Elaine), their frocks (Mouet Soeurs, Rue de la Paix), their *parfum* Lezna ("favored by Princess Troubetzkoi"), their tortoise-shell and pearl vanity-and-cigarette cases,

their flimsy lace edged hankies, their step-in combinations of vari-hued chiffon and three-colored baby ribbon, their hats and shoes for every season and every occasion—these two American girls with their flirtations with Russian princes, German barons, and "American Mark - billionaires," lunched, tea-ed, jazzed and shopped every single day in the city of Munich.

And because Bibi was a "Komtesse" and because they had dollars in abundance, Bibi also jazzed, shopped and drank tea, as happily as in former days.

When, in the autumn they left, Bibi was taught how to use a typewriter and later on went to an office. . . .

IN her twentieth year, her father died. Then she moved into another house and rented a large room under the roof. With some of her own furniture she made it look quite cosy. But the office did not leave her much time,

and it was only on Sundays that she could leisurely stroll about, in slippers and dressed in a kimono—reading a little—looking out of the window over the roofs.

She looked a bit paler, a bit older, and her eyes had lost some of their former very childish expression.

And she felt profoundly unhappy. . . .

One afternoon, going home from the office, she brushed against a young man.

"Pardon," he said, and then, surprised, "But it's *you*, Countess."

"Yes—I," she smiled, her eyes immediately flirting.

He was a friend from former days. One of those ridiculously slim-waisted, blond, spick-and-span "*Schieber-Aristocraten*," a thin platinum bracelet dangling from his wrist and a black and gold seal ring on his third finger.

They walked on together, and he invited her out to dinner.



Bibi pursed up her mouth, cocked her head on one side, looked at her watch and finally said:

"Ye-es—I think I am able to go—"

After that day they often met; once a week—twice a week—three or four times a week—then every day—finally—

Bibi dressed in an elaborately tight skirt, reaching below her ankles, and in a short *petit-gris* jacket, her eyes hardly visible under the brim of a small tricorn hat, spent many hours strolling on "*Kauffinger*" and "*Theatinerstrasse*."

Then she would have tea somewhere, invariably with music, with a chair extra for the neat white paper parcels.

The office had to do without Bibi.

But in the Regina-Bar or the Odeon-Casino, she spent nearly every evening: a very slim, blonde young woman, dressed in extremely fashionable dresses, pulled tightly round her sleek limbs—lavender blue—smokey gray with silver or emerald—and with her, tall and immaculate, Nickel.

Then, with one arm round his neck, her body supple against his, her legs in the tightness of her dress showing the faintest vibration, she would dance, every single dance, her eyes half shut with blue shadows precisely painted around them, and her lips pencilled bright vermilion.

Friends there were, too.

Three.

George, Paul, Mitja.

And Bibi laughed, flirted and danced with all three of them, without preference.

It was George who brought an acquaintance along one evening, an English journalist, Sidney Donovan.

And Bibi noticed how this tall, broad-shouldered man, with his good-looking, lazy face, his badly-fitting clothes, made the others, correctly-in-evening-dress, look affected and very nearly feminine.

She nodded when they were introduced, in her slightly disdainful manner, her lips pursed and her eyes disinterested.

He sat down, crossed his legs and

resumed his conversation with George.

Not once did he look at Bibi.

Only once, when later in the evening, she danced past him, with Nickel, their mouths close together—she saw out of the corner of her eyes, Sidney Donovan looking at her with unfeigned amusement.

III

A WEEK later, she met him, when lunching by herself in Alt-Wien. He came over to her table and sat down.

It was nearly three o'clock before they left.

Some days later she met him again, and this time he invited her to come and have tea with him some day at his villa, out in Starnberg at the lake, where he lived.

"It is very pretty there now," he said.

"Ye-es—" she hesitated.

"Well?" he asked.

"I don't think I can go."

"You mean—You don't think Nickel will let you?"

She flushed and asked:

"What do you mean—what has he to do with it?"

"Oh!" he answered, smiling, "I thought everything!"

Then suddenly she crinkled up her shoulders, laughed and said:

"Yes—that is true—but I am coming—some time!"

She told a lie—and went.

She went once, once again, and then nearly every fortnight. She went in the afternoon, had tea with him and came back early in the evening.

From some corners of the villa, white, small and untidy from the outside, one could get a glimpse of the lake—it was extremely pretty out there. In the garden acacias bloomed and the grass grew high and smelled of May flowers.

Usually they sat in the garden, she chatting and he listening, amused and smoking a pipe—never did he refer to Nickel, never did he make love.

In his sitting-room she had asked

about every picture and every book. And once she was rather surprised when he said of a large photograph of two children and a woman, "That's my wife and the kiddies at home."

ONCE, a sweet spring day, she stayed longer and in the evening they sat outside on the steps of the little porch listening to a bird whistling somewhere. And Sidney Donovan then took one of her hands in his, and so they sat, very quietly.

Then came a day when Bibi said to herself, "You are in love with that big, big Englishman—that Seednee. . . ."

Some days later Nickel unexpectedly left town, and Bibi put on a new white dress, of some fluffy voile (bought the day before with Nickel), white shoes and white silk stockings, bought a ticket first class "Munchen-Starnberg," and seated herself in a corner with a magazine and a box of chocolates.

Not until she walked up the narrow path leading to his house, did the possibility strike her of his not being at home. But he was, and had apparently just finished his lunch, although it was nearly three o'clock.

He was sitting at a large round table, near the open window, littered with jars of jam, dishes with meat and eggs, cups, saucers and somewhere on the edge a huge bowl with crimson ramblers.

He wore an old tweed Norfolk jacket, and white canvas shoes on his bare feet—he sat gazing out of the window smoking a pipe, and looked extremely lazy and handsome.

When he turned around and saw Bibi, he took the pipe out of his mouth and stared.

And it was then that Bibi suddenly felt shy.

She stuck out her hand a little stiffly.

"How do you do," she said. "I hope you don't mind my coming?"

"No—not in the least—please sit down."

"I—I—wanted to come," she faltered, "and really you don't mind?"

He smiled and put a hand under her

chin, turning her face toward him, "Why should I mind?"

"Oh—I—I don't know," she flushed nervously.

"Well, I don't, either—I love having you here."

"Ye-es?"

"Of course—" Then very tenderly he put an arm around her, and kissed her cheek.

But she flung both her arms round his neck and cried,

"But—I—love you—"

"Yes?"

"Ye-es—I love you so much—"

He kissed her mouth and smiled, "You dear little child!"

IV

NICKEL received a note.

A ridiculous note.

And he was expected to understand and to forgive and not to be cross.

When he had read it he looked round his room. A hat hung on the back of a chair, a hanky, a wee bit of cambric, lay on his writing-table. On the lamp dangled an absurd little Pierrot, Bibi's favorite possession. Nickel flicked at it with a finger and it swayed to and fro.

Then Nickel went to the cupboard and carefully began taking out the frocks and coats.

The little Pierrot was left dangling. And Bibi?

Bibi spent no more afternoons in the *Kauffingerstrasse*, nor did she shop or jazz— Bibi spent many hours before the typewriter, while Sidney Donovan lay on the couch, smoking and dictating.

She felt very happy; she never thought of the past, nor of the future. She tried housekeeping and mended his socks, sometimes for hours, sometimes not for three weeks.

There were moments when she would stop in the middle of the room to sing with an absurdly grave face and her feet precisely together, "*Ich mochte mal*," or "*Nur eine Nacht*." Then when Sidney Donovan would cry out, "Oh, those rotten German songs!" she



would end up, her eyes pathetically heavenward, "Love me and die wureld is mein—" or "Mei leetle grey 'ome in die West."

Then Sidney Donovan would lift her up in his arms, laughing.

Winter came, with much snow and many cold days. The lake was grey and motionless, and the mountains hardly ever to be seen.

They went "rodeling" and skiing, and in the evenings they walked about in slippers and made punch.

One evening when Bibi, with a severe cold, was lying on the couch, Sidney Donovan made the supper ready, and her eyes followed him walking on tip-toe, through the dimly lighted room.

Suddenly tears rolled down her cheeks and she felt vaguely sad and weak.

"Seed-nee," she whispered.

He came over to the couch and put his arms round her. "Bibi—why—but what's the matter?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing—really nothing," she answered, trying to smile, "but—but—

S.S.—July—6

you are so sweet to me and—and—"

"But, dear—that's nothing to cry about—"

He kissed her.

"I know—but I am so happy—and this can't last—it can't. . . ."

* * *

After the letter came, Bibi felt the change.

Regularly, twice a month, letters came from England with that large, dashing handwriting. When she gave Sidney Donovan this one, she saw him frown.

But neither of them spoke of it.

Then one evening they came home late from the theater in Munich. After supper Sidney Donovan put his pipe away and pulled Bibi onto his knees.

"I've got to talk with you—" he said.

"Ye-es."

"I've had a letter."

"I know."

"Well, it's the third one asking me why I don't come home. You see, I've been here much longer than I intended, too—she wants me to see the children."

"Yes-es."

"So I've got to be thinking of going—"

"Yes. . . ."

But then she flung her arms round his neck and cried, "But—but you can't leave me. I can't live without you—what must I do!"

"Oh—well—you'll find someone else—some day."

She gasped, "But I love you—so—so much." Tears suddenly streamed down her cheeks.

He kissed her. "Bibi—now, Bibi—be sensible."

"I can't be sensible—I love you—"

She looked at him and saw in his eyes an expression nearly sad, and infinitely tender.

"You love me, don't you?—you do—oh, you do." •

"Dear—it can't be helped—be a sensible little woman—" He kissed her, with short little kisses, her cheeks, her eyes, her neck. Then with his arms tightly round her body, he suddenly passionately kissed her mouth.

She wriggled out of his embrace and fiercely asked, "When are you going— You know it already. Tell me."

And then with his eyes lowered he answered,

"At the end of this month—"

A sob—and desperately moving arms.

* * *

WANTED—A young woman of refinement, as companion in Dutch family living on country estate.

BIBI answered the advertisement, and went.



To an Impassive Woman

By John Class

*YOU are beautiful—
Beautiful as sunlight
On a frozen waterfall.
You are cold—
Yet your eyes have the gleam
Of the devil's fires.
Your tongue is ice,
And the words you speak
Are as tinkling glass
Stained red
By the blood of your lips.*



TO ask a man for advice about women simply because he has been married more than once, is like asking a man born blind to describe the other side of the moon.

The Wildcat's CLAWS

By Nonie Rose

VAMPING

*"is nothing but an invitation—
a card dropped before any old guy
with your address on it . . ."*

*Such was Lunette's
bitter wisdom,
but it saved an impulsive girl.*

*A vivid story of
New York's studios
and their dangers.*

THOUGH the light was fading in the studio, Jay Buell was reluctant to lay aside his brushes. He stood back, looked at his work and was very nearly satisfied. What depth of color in the flesh tones—what depth of scorn and weary wisdom in the face!

The model had come up behind him and with a curious, cynical sneer also inspected the painting: the bit of soul that this penetrating artist had put on canvas.

"It is wonderful—wonderful," he said at length, not as one who is proud of his skill but as one who looks upon a painting that his brush has never touched; one that he feels, in the colder moments following execution, that he could never have done.

"So that's what I'm like, eh! But you've painted half a dozen of me looking like—Jezebels. I should think you'd have enough of 'em."

With a little cape carelessly thrown over one opal shoulder, half revealing her firm, supple body, she stood, her head tilted back, a hand on her hip and stared at the painting as she might have stared at a woman she disliked. Then with a keen look at the artist, she frowned.

"Sa—ay, are you just keeping me here posing so that I'll have an easy way of paying back all the money you loaned me? I never posed before; nobody ever wanted to paint me. If that's it—don't."

"No—you have a hundred faces; this is only one. I'll get the others yet. This is one that shows all your evil knowledge of the world and your pride in that knowledge. It has bit in; see—your dark eyes are as hard and cold as a lump of lead quartz, with the same glitter! Your spirit—untamed; hair, wild and electric—as untamed as your spirit. If ever a person was born under the fire sign, you were. It will burn you up unless you find an outlet. Look! Your eyes seem to say—"

"I know what they say. They say: 'It's a hell of a world, ain't it?' That's what they say."

"They say more than that. They say: 'You haven't conquered yet, old world, and I dare you to!'"

"You don't need glasses, Mr. Buell; anyone who can see all you think you see."

A dull flush spread over her cheeks; she gathered up her scanty robe, put forth a beautiful bare foot and ankle, took the long gold ear-rings from her ears and the marble-sized topaz beads from around her neck and laid them on a small inlaid coffee stand. Linger- ing there, her fingers still fumbling the beads, her lips were parted as though there was something further that must be said, but Jay Buell was again absorbed in inspection of his work, so with a shrug of her shoulders, she went slowly toward the dressing room. Halfway, she turned

and looked back, a faint smile that she was scarcely conscious of resting for a moment on her lips.

With child-like eagerness Jay Buell's slender body was bent forward, his brown, mousey hair that showed no more signs of age than his spirit, falling across his high, scholarly forehead. One long, tendon-ridged hand rested on the easel.

"Ah, Lunette," he said aloud, "you'd like to be so hard that even a diamond could not leave a scratch. That is what the picture shows. A woman so hard that—"

She came back a few steps, holding her cape close about her, well off the untidy floor.

"See here, Mr. Buell—why do you always call me Lunette? My name is Stella Laverty. What's the idea? Who is this Lunette person? Someone I look like?"

Jay Buell looked around at her, met her intent gaze and sought refuge in a twisted smile.

"Why—no," he said with some hesitation, "I don't really know why the name sprang into my mind when I first called you that, but—if you'd rather I wouldn't, I won't call you Lunette any more. I—"

"I don't know that it's any worse than Laverty, whoever she is. Who is she?"

"She was a saint. First a lady at Sir Arthur's court, renowned for her chastity—the Lady Luned. When she died, she was made a saint—Saint Lunette."

His voice was soft and low; he might have been telling a fairy story to a child he loved.

"Oh—I see. Well—" there was a snap to her voice, "call me what you like if you get any fun out of it. What's it to me? I'm here to pose. I guess—I—know why you called me that."

"Oh—I didn't mean to offend you—truly, nor to hurt your feelings. I'm not a stone-thrower. Besides, the story isn't told till the last chapter is written. There was once a girl who

was the most wicked girl in her town—"

"If she lived in New York, she must have been *some* wicked."

"No—it was Alexandria. She reformed before she died and—"

"Yeh! That's when they all reform."

"Atoned to the fullest. Her name was Thais."

"Yeh!"

"So you see it is not only those who have never sinned who—"

"That's fine talk, but if you wanted to paint a picture, you'd take care that you had a good, clean, unspotted canvas, wouldn't you? But—what's it all to me? I've no use for women and I hate men—all of 'em."

She took a step nearer to him and her voice was tense, her emotions restrained by obvious effort.

"I never forget anything, Mr. Buell. Of all the men I've ever run into, you're the only one who has been decent. You're the only one who has ever acted like I was anything but a doormat to be used and left outside, or a decayed orange that should be thrown into a garbage pail. You paid the rent in that dump on Bleecker Street when I was sick and took care of me when that old woman—a woman, mind you—would have thrown me out into the street. I wonder how long the saints in heaven would stay saints if they were dumped in this town, young, poor and fairly pretty! I wonder!"

"Lunette, don't get too bitter. Fight it out. I'm not going to say it's a good old world and all's right in it, but I am going to say that we are here, I believe, to try and leave it a little better."

Jay Buell looked at the girl with friendliness in his cool eyes; an impersonal friendliness that said more than words. In spite of a certain polished worldliness, he had for all creatures a genuine and unsuspecting kindness. Into contact with them, he put more than bare, stripped courtesy, just as in his work he put more

than excellent technique and knowledge of color and line. It was that something that drew all simple people and children to him and held back only those who, stiff with gold and caution, believed that every smile and pleasant nod was a magnet to draw from them some of their cherished wealth. Eyes wary with suspicion, minds chilled by it, they suspected his ingratiating child-like smile and showed that they were not to be taken in by it. Only too often they came to his studio, inspected his work with judgment already throttled and went away with no less wealth than when they came. . . .

INTO the silence that had fallen between them, trilled a high, sweet voice and around the tall leather screen at the end of the studio, peeped Joan, Jay Buell's motherless daughter.

"Daddy—see the wonderful roses Mr. Conant sent me! Aren't they gorgeous?"

She hesitated a moment, then seeing the model off the stand, rushed into the studio, her arms filled with red roses, their spicy fragrance preceding her in a warm wave.

Sixteen, with still the lissome roundness of childhood, her cheeks were as frankly rosy as a healthy child's. She was not yet old enough to have danced and dissipated the color from them nor sophisticated enough to plaster them a sickly white.

"Look, Miss Laverty—aren't they wonderful?" She held the roses toward Stella and then plumped down on a low bench, hugging them to her ecstatically.

Suddenly she seemed to remember and sat up straight—the flowers thrown aside as though they meant nothing to her.

Her father, watching her, smiled in understanding.

"Put the flowers in water, child; they'll wither in this warm room. . . ."

Joan had hair the color of sealskin,

shining with vitality and care, and as she threw back her head petulantly, the light rippled over her sleek waves and caught the red ribbon on that bound her hair close to her small head. She rose with dignity, her manner saying frankly that she was no longer a child—she was a woman who had an admirer, and in offended silence she made her unhurried way toward the screen.

Stella continued her interrupted way to the dressing room, and as she closed the door after her, she heard Joan's high, sweet voice call back to her father in an affected, languid drawl:

"Rawther sweet of Mr. Conant, wasn't it, father?"

Stella slipped out of the little cape and threw it aside with an angry gesture that had nothing whatever to do with the garment.

"Silly little fool," she said to herself. "She needs spanking."

II

WHEN she re-entered the studio, dressed for the street, Jay Buell was gone and Joan, adorned with the earrings and topaz beads that Stella had left on the coffee stand and wrapped in a trailing Chinese crepe shawl, was strutting about the studio, stopping now and then to stare with delight at her reflection in different mirrors and twisting this way and that, holding a pose that especially pleased her. As Stella watched her, she jerked off the ribbon that bound her head, threw it on the floor and shook her loosened hair down over her shoulders.

Stella's mouth twisted in a smile that held a tinge of contempt—a contempt that was taking too large a part in her estimate of people.

"You think you've got all the makings, don't you, kid?" she said at last.

"Oh!" Joan became aware that she had been observed and turned toward Stella haughtily. "I beg your pardon."

Then girlish curiosity asserted itself.

"What—what do you mean—the makings? I thought that was for smoking—cigarettes?"

"There's more than one kind: that was not the one I meant."

"Which one *did* you mean?" Joan edged nearer, consumed by curiosity and the egotism that likes to hear itself discussed and analyzed.

"Oh—what every girl your age thinks she's got—the makings of a vamp."

"Oh!" Joan gasped and her rosy cheeks turned a deeper red as though Stella had probed and read her inmost thoughts. But her head went up; she smiled self-consciously and stole another satisfied glance at herself.

"But—don't flatter yourself. Vamping is—nothing but an invitation, see! A card dropped before any old guy with your address on it. He gets your number right away and plays the game but it's his game he plays—not yours. Vamps! Believe me, kid, the ones that win are the ones that lose. There ain't nothing to it. I could tell you of more than one case."

She stopped short, clamping her lips down on confidences and her face grew as hard and cold as a granite block.

Joan was silent and kept her eyes on the floor; then she put back her loose, waving hair and automatically began to twist it into a flat knot at the nape of her neck.

Stella watched her.

"You're not the vamp type, kid; you're too soft. So soft, you'd melt. To get on in this world, you've got to be hard. I know. I was soft—once."

SHE walked away from the subdued girl and looked out of the window, down the cold, wind-swept street. Around the corner came a long, dark green car and slowed up, jockeying for a place to park. Watch-

ing it, her cynical smile sprang into place on her lips. Joan had disappeared. Stella thrust her shabby bag behind a stack of magazines on the long oak table and slipped out of the studio.

There was no smile on her face now; she loitered along the street till a backward glance assured her that the occupant of the green car had left it and she watched while he disappeared within the door of the studio.

Then she quickened her steps. Her jacket was thin but she did not seem to notice the sharp breeze. Deep in abstraction, she noticed nothing. A shrill oath, following the blast of a siren in her ear, made her jump instinctively back toward the curb she was just leaving. From her point of safety, she looked out into the street.

A young woman with large, sooty black eyes and the newest and tiniest of brocade turbans topping her yellow hair, leaned out of a taxicab and tossed aside a half-smoked cigarette. The two women stared at one another in recognition. The occupant of the taxicab gave a sharp direction to the chauffeur and he backed along the curb.

"My God, Stella—it's you! Get in. I'll take you where you're going."

"Hello, Ida. No, thank you. I've got an errand to do."

"What—shopping?"

"No—it—it's curiosity mostly, I guess. I'm—I'm a fool."

"That's nothing I don't already know," said Ida. She looked Stella over from shabby shoes to shabbier jacket and her laugh was hard. "I got to go on. I've got a date."

Stella walked on down the street without a glance at the departing taxicab. She found her way to a park entrance, crowded now with children and nurses. She realized that she was tired and found a seat at the end of a bench.

The sound of buses coming and going, the voices of children shouting, the squeal of roller skates, reached her ears like a murmur of

busy insects, so absorbed was she in her own thoughts. The wind blew sharply and she found herself looking at her red, ungloved hands where they rested in her lap as at something detached from her body. She laughed bitterly.

"That cur—that damn cur!"

The small boy who had been playing peacefully near her feet, suddenly broke into a cry and ran to his nurse, who looked askance at Stella.

Not until then did she realize that she must have spoken aloud and with what bitter venom to startle this playing child.

She rose at once, wondering how long she had been there brooding. Back along the thoroughfare she retraced her steps, hurrying past corners, taking chances on approaching cars that made drivers glare at her in rage. She entered the studio building and climbed the single flight to Buell's apartment.

"I'm a fool," she said to herself. "I'm a fool."

BEFORE the door of the studio, she hesitated. Then she rapped faintly, simultaneously throwing open the door.

On the low oak bench sat Joan Buell, her face, even in the dim, candle-lighted studio, a radiant thing. Her eyes were upon the man beside her, her hands in his.

As the door opened, he released Joan's hands and unperturbed, fished for his cigarette case.

Joan looked up and pouted; then as Stella approached, she sat up straighter, inquiry in her big eyes warring with resentment. Stella seemed at ease.

"I forgot my purse," she drawled, her lips restraining a bitter smile.

But it was the man, not Joan, upon whom she fixed her hard and glittering eyes. In the candle light, his yellow hair took on a faintly luminous quality. It was parted at one side and worn so long that it

curled a bit at the ends; the sort of man who must have been called when he was young, a "pretty boy." Now his lips were a shade too thick as they pressed down on a cigarette; neck too thick—looking thicker as he leaned back relaxed, eyeing Stella with opaque, expressionless, China blue eyes.

Only too many people were ready to believe that because those eyes betrayed nothing, they also concealed nothing. About his well-padded body there lay an indefinable odor of lavender water and a more definable odor of self-indulgence. The sort of young man who made of "settling down" the issuance of a marriage license that might be renewed every so often like a ninety-day note.

Stella moved with languid insolence down the studio, helped herself to a cigarette from an open box and lit it. Joan fidgeted, and then with an obvious desire to relieve the strain of silence, said with fluttering breath: "This is Mr. Conant, who—who—sent me the lovely roses."

"Yeh!"

Stella seated herself on the model stand and puffed her cigarette; her back was toward the cluster of candles, her face in semi-shadow.

The man moved perceptibly further down on the low oak seat, apparently a natural movement as he reached for an ash tray, but his eyes were upon the model stand.

"Must be getting cooler; one can feel the chill in here," he said with an ingratiating smile at Stella.

"Yeh!" Stella puffed her cigarette with absorption.

The man got up with an air of affected ease and ambled around the studio, studying a sketch here and there as though nothing else had brought him there.

Joan was silent—silent as a child who has been discovered in some mischief, but her eyes followed Conant about the studio. She was not yet old enough to cover a situation with small talk and Stella was not

inclined to lighten the atmosphere. Conant peered into all the corners of the studio, making gay little comments on pictures, places and people. And though his gaiety was light as the powder on a butterfly's wing, it brought only a scowl to Stella's face.

Here was no butterfly though he did pose as one. Here was a beetle who burrowed and made his home in filth and upon whose face it had left its trace. Yet, even as she scowled, she had to admit to herself that there was a certain insouciance about him that had its charm to one whose knowledge went no further than the surface.

At length, when another awkward silence had superseded the light and merry comments, Stella rose and strolled over to the table where her purse lay hidden.

"It's getting late," she said with a steady glance at Conant.

But he said nothing; he might not have heard her—his face was toward a faded tapestry. She picked up her purse, fluttered the pages of an art magazine, her smoking cigarette dropping its ash on the table. When she saw the time on a half-concealed desk clock on the table, she slapped the shiny pages of the magazine together sharply, reached for a fresh cigarette from the open box, lit it and again sat down on the model stand, her legs crossed, her shabby purse hanging over her knee.

Staring before her, apparently as oblivious to Joan's resentment as she was to Conant's impatiently polite tolerance, she heard the heavy door open. At once she stood up, dropped her cigarette on the bare floor, ground it with the tip of her shoe and with a drawling:

"Will you want me again, Mr. Buell, in the morning?" strolled toward the door.

"Why, yes—to be sure. I thought you knew I would want you for a long time." Jay Buell's tone was puzzled but his voice was kind as he

added: "I hope you didn't wait all this time to see me?"

"Oh, no," she said dryly, "I—came—back."

"Oh—very well. Goodnight."

A last glance showed her Conant smiling tenderly at Joan as he bent toward her. Into her eyes as she closed the door behind her leaped the icy glitter of quartz.

III

It was still there next morning, intensified, when her glance fell upon the red roses in a pottery jar, their long stems bringing their blossoms shoulder high. On the table lay a newly opened box of chocolates, pounds of them.

"You've moved that bit of Breton coast," Stella complained as she prepared to pose. "I've been keeping my eye on that for a focusing point."

"Yes—I had a bit of luck. Mr. Conant fancied it and bought it."

"Oh!"

"He bought one that I painted down in Sicily, too—the two children with the old-fashioned water jug."

"Oh!"

Something in her tone made Jay Buell look at her closely. "What's the matter, Lunette? Why shouldn't he buy them?"

"No reason, I suppose." And to herself she said: "I'm a fool—what's it to me, anyway?"

"He's been a real friend, Roy Conant has. He's so good to Joan. The child gets lonely; she knows no one her own age to go with, and I can't do much for her right now. He takes her for rides in the country and it's good for her. Very few men would care to bother with a child like Joan—she's such an infant."

"How old is she, Mr. Buell?"

"Sixteen—but she's a mere baby in experience."

"So are you," was on Stella's lips, but she checked herself and threw a sardonic glance toward the flowers, the candies on the table and the blank

space where the bit of Breton coast had hung.

"The cur—the damn cur," she said to herself. Then, after a moment: "It's nothing to me—nothing at all. But he can't see through anything. If he wants to stay asleep, let him. He'll wake up when the alarm clock's already gone off. But—it's nothing to me. . . ."

But the frown on her face deepened till Buell said merrily:

"Don't overdo it, Lunette. You—"

"Don't overdo what, Mr. Buell?"

"The hardness and—"

"Oh—I was just thinking."

"Must have been pleasant thoughts."

"Yes—very. Sa—ay, Mr. Buell, how well do you know Roy Conant?"

"Oh—I've known him a long time. He used to dabble in art himself, but had too much money and wouldn't stick to it. I had not seen him for years till I ran across him at the opening of the Salon this fall. I showed a portrait of Joan there."

"You don't really know him very well then; yet—yet you let him take your daughter out for rides almost every day and—"

"Oh—she's a mere child."

"Aren't you afraid that he'll elope with her some day?"

"That child? It's too absurd."

"But don't you think that even seeing so much of him will spoil boys her own age for her?"

"Think she sees too much of Conant, eh?"

"It's none of my business, but—yes, I do."

He rested his brushes a moment on his palette and reflected.

"Well—maybe she does—maybe she does. I hadn't thought about it. I'll speak to her. I don't really approve of him sending her such expensive flowers and candy; it might spoil the child. I'll have to speak to her."

AND he did speak to her, and though Joan pouted and wept, the rides be-

came fewer and briefer. But the deluge of flowers and bonbons continued.

There were days when Joan's eyes were swollen and reddened because she was not allowed to go out with Roy Conant; days when he came to the studio and chatted amiably with Jay Buell, with merely a pleasant nod for Joan or a brief interview in a corner of the studio, but Joan's eyes were brighter and her spirits higher when he left.

By the time the bustle and chill of the holiday season was upon them things seemed to have adjusted themselves. Even Stella's suspicions were allayed though she still eyed Conant with intolerant contempt when he came to the studio on his brief though frequent visits and refused to be beguiled either by his frankly admiring glances or his pointed badinage. . . .

SWATHED in a glittering robe that left arms and shoulders bare and showed her exquisitely modelled feet and ankles, Stella took her pose and waited for Jay Buell to begin work.

"I want to get out that monotype of the woods at Auteil; Conant is coming for it. He wants it for a gift for his mother. I'll be with you in a moment."

And Stella waited, immersed in dreams of her own. Presently she was aroused by cold air on her bare feet. She had not been conscious of a knock at the door, but it stood open and in the doorway, Roy Conant waited, posed as calculatingly as any actress who knows how to make the most of her entrances.

He closed the door and approached slowly, laid aside his topcoat and hat and with his opaque blue eyes on Stella, smiled ingratiatingly.

"Mr. Buell expects me; that is why I just walked in. I'll wait, if you don't mind."

"I don't care what you do."

"Wildcat," he said under his breath.

Stella stood erect then—as tall as the man before her and glared at him with concentrated insolence.

He came closer.

"That's great," he said mockingly. "Hold it!"

With an unexpected movement, he reached out and grasped her bare arms above the elbows and bent his smiling face close to hers.

"What is your name?"

"Lunette," she said, twisting away; but he caught her arm again.

"Lunette—what?"

"That's all."

"All right, Lunette—that's enough."

With a quick glance toward the screen, he slipped an arm about her naked shoulders and drew her closer—so close that she could smell the odor of lavender water and the pungent aroma of expensive cigars. Before she could release herself, he bent and kissed her neck.

In a gust of fury she freed herself. He pursed his lips.

"Wildcat," he said again, but with a chuckle of pleasure as though it amused him. "Even wildcats can be tamed, you know."

"Yes," she said with concentrated scorn, "but it takes a man to do it—a real man; not a lump of tallow. The tame ones are the only ones you can manage. The kind that wander out into the woods and think they're wildcats but have scarcely left the family basket before. You get 'em young and green; I know your kind."

"You'll know me better," he said, reaching for her again and with an arm about her waist drew her so close that her robe fell across his arm.

Just as she silently and angrily thrust him away from her, Jay Buell came whistling from behind the screen. . . .

Long after Roy Conant had gone with the monotype for which he had ostensibly come, Jay Buell painted silently with only the usual intervals in which he said impersonally: "Rest." Beyond that, there was noth-

ing said. The morning passed without one unnecessary word.

At length with a manner that was an obvious attempt to be casual, he said:

"I don't want to lose my model, Lunette. Don't you think that—that there had better not be any love-making in the studio? Business first, you know."

"Love-making! My God, Mr. Buell—love-making! That—that lump of tallow! That— Oh—how despicable!"

And at that moment she hated even the kindly Buell that he could think her guilty of such a thing.

Something in her vehemence made him look up from his work.

"I'm sorry, Lunette—I could not help but see Conant with his arm about your waist. He's a good sort but he is like most men, I'm afraid; and you are a very good-looking girl—very beautiful," he said slowly, his eyes sweeping her face.

IV

At tea time, Joan came in, suppressed excitement marking every move as she fluttered from the tea table to the window and back again.

Idly Stella noted that the red ribbon that usually bound her small head was missing and her waves of brown hair were caught down by a net. Her plump hands hovered over the tea tray; once she stopped and looked with a tiny frown at a stain on her forefinger that had not yielded to treatment.

They were all unusually silent; Joan fidgeted like a restless child. Across this silence came the shrill blast of a motor horn. Joan sprang from her chair but under Stella's cold, inquiring gaze, she sat down plumply. There followed a sharp rap at the door. Joan ran to open it.

Roy Conant, affable and genial as usual, made his calculated entrance. Over his arm he carried a heavy top-coat.

"Wonder if you can spare your little girl for a short ride? I have to drive to Westmere and thought she might like to go with me."

"Oh, yes," Joan burst out, her eyes never leaving his face.

With a sidelong glance at Stella who seemed absorbed in her cigarette, Buell said:

"I'm afraid we've been rather a nuisance, Mr. Conant. You've been awfully good to the child, but I think we'd better not impose on you too much. Joan must stay at home today."

"It's a marvelous afternoon." •

Conant looked out of the window, but Stella fancied that, as he brought his eyes back to the group, they rested with especial emphasis and meaning on Joan, whose eyes had filled with childish tears. As for Stella herself he might never have seen her before.

"Oh, Dad—please. I'd love to go."

"Don't you think you've been imposing on Mr. Conant? He's spoiled you taking you so often."

"Just as you say, Mr. Buell," Conant hastened to say with disarming amiability. "But I thought the air would do her good; she's indoors so much."

Joan's lips were trembling and she seemed barely able to restrain her tears.

Buell looked from her to Conant and laughed.

"Well—since she wants to go so much, take her. But be sure and bring her home early."

Joan clapped her hands like a child and hurried from the studio.

Roy Conant sat down to wait, his eyes turned deliberately away from Stella. The episode of the morning might never have happened.

After a prolonged absence, Joan appeared at the screen and Conant rose to meet her.

"I hope you brought a warm coat; it will be cold driving."

Joan held a plaid cape toward him. He took it and threw it across his

arm over his own topcoat. With cheeks as red as holly berries, Joan hurried down the studio before him and with a darting, impulsive movement, rushed to the tea table and kissed her father a quick good-bye.

Jay Buell smiled at her and patted her shoulder, reminding her again that she was to be home early. Thereupon she kissed him again and smiling gayly at Stella, went swiftly toward the door.

Conant with a flourish of his hat that included even the morose Stella, threw open the door. In pulling the heavy door to after him, his coat caught and he drew it out with a jerk.

The door swung back and Stella rose. She followed the two noiselessly down the stairs and stood a moment at the threshold, staring at the car. The extra wraps were in the tonneau making a small mound and from beneath shone the shiny handle of an overnight bag.

Not until they had shot away from the curb, did she return to the studio.

"Somehow I wish I had been firm with Joan and not let her go," said Buell. "But she seemed so disappointed. I really must put a stop to this. I'll speak to her tomorrow and explain everything."

"You wouldn't give her dynamite to play with because she wanted it, would you?" Stella leaned forward, her voice heavy, her breath coming fast.

"I don't think it's as dangerous as that." He laughed a comfortable, unafraid laugh.

"I don't know. I—don't—know." Stella saw before her the tonneau of the long green car, the little mound of wraps, half-hiding a shiny overnight bag.

"Oh, no! Conant wouldn't dream of eloping with a child of sixteen even if Joan had any romantic nonsense about her. You—you've put ideas into my head."

Stella yawned and shrugged her shoulders and soon, with an absent-

mindful goodnight, let herself out of the studio.

With a cynical twist to her lips she sat down in her own room and ate her supper, then leaning back in her chair, surrendered herself to her thoughts.

They were not pleasant and her eyes grew hard—her mouth tightened into an unlovely line.

"It's not my affair," she said aloud. "What's it to me? That big-eyed sixteen-year-old baby; so busy playing at something all the time. Playing at love now. Wonder if she knows what he means by love?"

She picked up a magazine and tried to read, but across the page danced a shiny overnight bag—a whole string of overnight bags.

"That cur—he wouldn't dare try tricks with *her*," she assured herself, but the bag refused to dance beyond the limit of her vision.

She could not read, she could not rest. Finally she threw the magazine aside and tried to sleep. Never had she been so wide awake. She got up; lay down; picked up her magazine; threw it aside.

"He wouldn't dare—not with her. He wouldn't be such a cad—such a cur. A mere baby!"

But she walked up and down her room nervously. A passing glance at her alarm clock showed her it was ten o'clock; she swore with energy; she had been dreaming the hours away and minutes might be precious. Struggling into her jacket, she hurried to the street, her mind racing ahead of her feet.

When she reached the studio, she was surprised to find that she had been running and was out of breath.

"Is—is everything all right? Is—is Joan back? she asked without any softening preliminaries.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come. Joan has not returned. What shall I do? You don't—you don't think she has eloped? I trusted him—he's twice her age. You don't think—"

"Yes, I do. She kissed you goodby

when she left; she doesn't usually."

"No—no—she—"

"And in the tonneau of the car, there was an overnight bag."

"But she wouldn't do such a thing—not Joan."

"It's just what she would do. Oh, you don't know girls; they're not just dolls. She's playing at love—at romance—but she's playing with the wrong man. She's playing with a man who knows all the moves, Mr. Buell, you can believe me."

"What shall we do?"

"Where does he live—where?"

Together they feverishly searched the telephone directory, and it was Stella who took the initiative, more anxious now than even Buell himself. Her eyes were blazing, her manner tense. While she telephoned, Buell stood, half-dazed at her elbow.

It was with a gasp of relief that she hung up the receiver.

"Thank God—he's not in."

"Thank God? Why? What will we do now?"

Stella stood for a moment in thought.

"If *you* brought her back now—it would be only an interrupted romance; she would try it again the first chance she got and in the meanwhile enjoy the role of martyr. Leave her to me—I'll bring her back safe or—"

Stella's eyes narrowed and her hands closed convulsively into fists.

Jay Buell sat down weakly on the low oak seat, his arms hanging limp, his head drooping. He stared at his boot tips.

Stella Laverty left him sitting there and on foot hurried uptown to Roy Conant's bachelor quarters.

V

In the shadow of the towering apartment house just off the Avenue she waited till she grew cold with fear that her calculation had been wrong. Her shoulders ached from the cold, her eyes from the strain of

watching the cars as they drew up and stopped or passed by her sentinel post. At last, just when she was beginning to curse herself for her mistake, a long green car drew up at the curb.

Roy Conant stepped out and gave his hand to a small, plaid-wrapped form.

Like a ghost she slipped into the apartment house after them and followed them up the stairs to the second floor. As Roy Conant held the door open for Joan and stepped aside to let her pass, Stella walked in as confidently as though it were for her that the door had been opened.

Two pairs of eyes stared at her and there was fear in both. Her own eyes, sharpened by anxiety, looked first only at Joan, whose cheeks were rosy from the cold, whose hair was tousled, whose lips were soft and red.

Her glance relaxed and shifted only when she had satisfied herself that the look in Joan's eyes was the brightness of excitement instead of shame. Then she turned her attention to the startled man who seemed, for once, completely at a loss for words.

"Not on the program, was I?" she asked impudently as she helped herself to a cigarette and settled herself comfortably on the couch.

She watched Roy Conant as he gently removed Joan's plaid cape and lighter coat and a sarcastic smile flickered on her lips. Joan sat down timidly and looked about her with such obvious curiosity that it was plain the rooms were new to her.

Roy Conant's opaque blue eyes said nothing; his lips did not seem able to manage even an artificial smile.

"What are *you* doing here?" Stella said abruptly to Joan, at the same time removing her hat and laying it beside her on the couch.

Joan swallowed hysterically and threw an appealing glance toward

Roy Conant. He was busying himself about the wraps.

"I—we—we are going to be married," Joan at last confessed in a husky whisper.

"Married!" Stella laughed. "Is that so!"

Roy Conant crossed the room and stood before the couch but refused to meet Stella's eyes.

"You'd really marry that red-cheeked baby?" Stella asked as though she were only tremendously amused.

"We—we were talking about it." Joan found a tremulous voice.

"Roy—you said—"

"Said he loved you, I suppose. And you believed him." Stella's obvious amusement was tempered by boredom.

"We're going to be married in the morning. Roy—you tell her all about it."

"Yes—always—in the morning. Joan—ask him for the license."

Stella stood up, close to Roy Conant, her mocking face held at a tantalizing angle, her fluffy hair electric with vitality, her eyes alive and snapping.

"You're going to marry her?"

He met her eyes and the suspicion of Stella that had kept him silent and uneasy, gave way before a new idea. He smiled with suddenly renewed self-confidence and teetered back and forth on the rug, in his attitude the swagger of the male that preens before the female of his kind.

"Why—er—not jealous, are you—Wildcat?" The question was scarcely more than a whisper.

Into her eyes Stella threw a world of meaning, a provocative glance that drew him closer, so close that Stella stepped back from the flame in his eyes. He caught her arm.

"The wildcat jealous of the little tame one! Yet—this morning—"

Stella checked her keen desire to tear at the plump cheek so near her own.

"Send her home. What is she to you?"

Roy Conant looked around at Joan and then turned his back on her trembling lips, her tear-filled eyes, her dazed weaving of chubby hands.

"Will you stay?" It was a hoarse, throaty whisper.

Joan's pride came to her rescue. She strode toward them, breaking into their scarcely audible dialogue.

"Roy, give me the marriage license. I don't want to marry you now, not if—"

Conant flushed uncomfortably as he avoided Joan's eyes.

"As a matter of fact, Joan, there isn't any marriage license. You are under age and they wouldn't issue one without your father's consent." He mumbled something about getting it fixed up in the morning.

"Then why didn't you say so—why did you say we'd be married in the morning?"

Tears were washing her face like rain on red roses.

"I—I meant to explain it all to you, Joan. That—that was why I brought you here."

Stella looked at the weeping girl and summoned an expression that looked like scorn and contempt for her.

"Run along home, little one—he never intended to marry you. You threw yourself at his feet so that he couldn't help but stumble over you."

"Roy, you said—" Joan clutched at his sleeve.

Stella drew away from him.

"Oh, if you prefer tame cats, if there are really any promises that you care to keep—" She lounged over to the couch and picked up her hat; then sitting down, with a low laugh she threw her hat into the air and leaned back with air of an empress being amused, her dark eyes laughing at him, provoking him.

Conant's face had turned brick red; he was breathing heavily.

Joan seemed to have grown pitifully small and childish and forlorn,

hovering on the verge of tears. Roy Conant turned to her and laid a heavy hand on her shoulder. There was a hint of impatience in his voice.

"See here, Joan—we both made a mistake. You're too young to marry. I don't believe your father would give his consent to your marrying for some time yet. Maybe—maybe we'd better wait."

Joan drew away from him and a new dignity sat upon her chubby figure.

"I think I see. I was old enough for you—to—to say you loved. I was old enough to promise to marry—till—till she came. Till—" She choked on the rest of the sentence.

"Send her back to her father." Stella commanded impatiently. "Send her back."

"Wait." Roy Conant said in an undertone to Stella. "Wait."

With a hurt, reproachful glance at Stella, Joan summoned a creditable semblance of poise though her lips were trembling and walked slowly from the room. Roy Conant followed with her wraps.

Stella rushed to the window and threw it open, regardless of the sharp air.

Below, on the steps, Roy Conant stood beside Joan till a taxicab came into view. He hailed it and slipping a bill to the chauffeur, with a kindly if somewhat hurried goodnight, he sent Joan back to her father.

Stella returned to the center of the room and stood by the table, her fingers resting on a bronze book-end.

Presently the door was thrown open and Roy Conant rushed in, eyes glittering, lips wreathed in a satisfied smile.

"You just can't leave tame cats alone, can you?" Stella's voice was oily with deceptive softness.

"Oh—" He threw his coat across the couch. "Someone has to teach them their a b c's—it might as well be me. But you—you know you were wonderful this morning? I like spirit for a change. You looked like

a savage princess with that stuff wrapped around you."

"I was savage, all right."

"But I told you wildcats could be tamed, didn't I? Well, I was right. You're here."

"Tamed! You—you insufferable cur!" She picked up the book-end threateningly. "It's a good thing you came back to your rooms with that kid. That is the only thing that saved your life. I had a sister once—about Joan's age. Her name was Jennie Laverty. Ever hear of her?"

Roy Conant frowned.

"See here—that was as much her fault as mine. She—"

"Yeh! You make 'em think it's romance—you damn cur! But that kid's father is the only man in the world who was ever decent to me. I couldn't stand back and see you show her *your* road to romance—*your* road. Oh, damn you—I ought to kill you."

With the book-end still clutched in her hand, Stella moved toward the door.

"I think Joan knows now that you intended to marry her the way you married Jennie Laverty and Ida Haskell and God knows how many others."

"Don't go—let's talk this thing over. What's done can't be undone. But you—I like you—you are a real woman: a woman that any man could care for."

Stella sneered.

"I suppose you'd like to marry *me*, eh? Well—I'm too old to be taken in by that marriage talk."

"I swear I mean it."

She came back a step. Her voice was again soft and melodious.

"You'd really marry me?"

"Yes, I would."

"Why—you filthy lump of tallow, I wouldn't marry you if I had to go to jail for life otherwise."

Without another look toward the amazed man before her, she strode from the room.

VI

REGARDLESS of the fact that she had left her hat behind her, she ran through the streets, back to the studio. For, all at once, fearing guile, she worried anew for Joan's safety. She must know that she was safe, must see with her own eyes.

Without the formality of knocking, she threw open the studio door and leaned against the door frame, panting, her loosened hair hanging to her shoulders, her face white.

"You—you got home all right? Thank God—thank God," she said between gasps.

Joan was sitting on her father's lap, his arms about her as he tried to comfort her.

For a long moment Stella stood there, her face a screen of shifting emotions. Then the strain told and great sobs burst forth—tears rolled down her white and passionless cheeks.

Joan slipped from her father's knees and ran to her, a light shining in her dark eyes. She threw herself into the older woman's arms, sobbing her gratitude.

Stella pressed Joan to her breast while the tears that washed her cheeks lost themselves in the girl's tousled hair. All of her faults, all of her weaknesses, seemed to have dropped from her like garments burned away by fire, leaving only the compassionate purity of her lips, her softened eyes.

Jay Buell lowered his own eyes as if in awe before a miracle. With hands shaking, he moved toward them. There was admiration in his eyes—a tremble of grateful emotion in his voice and something else that made the shivering woman close her eyes and draw the chubby, childish Joan closer to her bosom.

"Lunette!" The word floated on the chill air of the studio like the merest ghost of a sound.

A Strange Coincidence

By Jay Jarrod

IN a quaint, old-fashioned village, all green and shaded, there once lived a little girl and boy who played their childish games together. I mention the fact that the village was green and shaded, for it was Springtime when the little girl and boy first met.

As the time rolled by, they saw much of each other, and their friendship, cemented by the passage of years, became a very staunch and beautiful thing. Both told each other there could be no one else, though, of course they were still very young.

But strange changes take place, and it was not long before the girl's parents moved to another town. She, being a good little girl, naturally accompanied them, while the young fellow, through force of circumstances, was compelled to set off on an expedition to unknown parts. It grieved them greatly to be separated, but then they both vowed that they would always think of one another, and that some day all would be well.

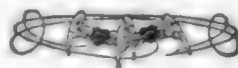
But years drifted by, and neither saw, nor even heard from the other.

* * * * *

On the side of a range of purple hills there is located a famous hot springs—famous not only for its remarkable waters, but for its wealthy patrons as well. It was at this very spa that years later the boy, who had reached manhood, arrived on a vacation. Oddly enough, the girl of his youth, who was, of course, no longer a girl, likewise chanced to visit the resort at the same time. Quite naturally, they both put up at the principal inn.

One evening, soon after their arrival, it happened that they both entered the hotel lounge at precisely the same moment. For an instant, the woman paused and gazed at the man. He, in turn, gave her a hasty glance and passed on.

Neither recognized the other.



NO woman was ever so attractive to a man that he did not wish to be alone sometimes.



MEN are happy and sad ; women are gay and miserable.



Every girl in the world is a

Cinderella

—and she knows that somewhere there is a Prince looking for her.

The Path Leads ON



*Here is the charming tale of a modern Cinderella
and of what she did to make it easier
for her Prince to know her. . . .*

By William Almon Wolff

JENNY couldn't have told just how she came to think of herself as Cinderella. She was always dreaming; mooning, Esther and Helen, her sisters, were likely to call it. But this dream was different. . . . Rum-maging about in the attic until she found an old book of fairy tales for children . . . hunting in it for the story of Cinderella . . . seeing just how much alike she and its heroine were. . . She laughed at herself sometimes. Only sometimes, though. Sometimes there were tears in her eyes.

She knew it was absurd. She didn't have a stepmother, and her own mother was good to her. So were Esther and Helen, though they were so much older than she—old maids, really—and couldn't be expected to understand anyone so young as Jenny. Jenny was twenty-two herself—not so young, she thought. But they were nice, usually; and she was happy enough at home.

What did set her off? Heavens knows! Seeing "Pég o' my Heart" when a road company came for one night? Perhaps. A movie she saw with Jimmy Hart? It might have been that.

Jimmy? He didn't count. He

really didn't. It used to make Jenny furious to have to protest about him so much.

"Jimmy?" she'd say, her voice rising in a scornful crescendo. "Jimmy Hart? Why, it's all he can do to support himself! And—anyway—Jimmy Hart—!"

She meant exactly what she said, and she was perfectly right. Oh, Jimmy dropped in, sometimes, in the evening, and if he happened to have some money in his pocket he was likely to say, indifferently:

"How about shooting a movie, Jen?"

Her answer depended a good deal on what film they were showing at the Palace. If it was something she wanted to see she'd go. And then, nearly always, Jimmy would try to hold her hand, when they were seated in the dark theatre. But he'd do it in such a stupid way! . . . She didn't take her hand away always, though. She'd let him hold it, sometimes. What difference did it make? Jimmy! Jimmy Hart! The hands men like Jimmy hold—the lips—only it's the cheeks, more often—that they kiss! What difference does it make?

No. Jimmy really didn't count. Except—well, like this: Jenny'd be

with him, at the movies, on a dark porch on a summer night—somewhere, anyway, in the dark, where she couldn't see him very well. And sometimes, when he made his clumsy overtures, it wouldn't be Jimmy whose hand closed about hers, whose lips touched her. Not Jimmy at all, stupid, ridiculous, awkward Jimmy, but someone else, shining in her dream. Who else? Oh, no one! No one at all. Just—someone. . . .

There *must* be someone. Somewhere. Some time he'd come. She hadn't seen him yet. He wasn't one of the town boys. They were better than poor Jimmy, some of them. But they didn't pay much heed to Jenny. They seemed to like girls like May and Clara Moore and—oh, lots of other girls. Jenny didn't care—much. Her time was coming.

Coming. It hadn't come yet, though. Hardly. But then, Cinderella had had to wait, too. It seemed to her, when she allowed for all the things she had to take into account, that her case wasn't so different. Working every day at that old office, taking dictation, writing letters, answering the telephone, caring for the files. Esther and Helen had easier lives. They taught in the high school. Look at the vacations they had! All summer long, just about, and time at Christmas. And she with her beggarly two weeks. It wasn't fair. They didn't have to work at all, really. Yet they had plenty of money. They could buy all the clothes they pleased—and look at them! While she. . . .

It was when she was alone in her room at night, brushing out her hair, that Jenny was always most sure that her time was coming; the time when she could make May and Clara and the others jealous; when people would have to stop talking to her about Jimmy Hart the way they did.

She was quite lovely then. She had beautiful hair, when it was loose, and not distorted by one of her at-

tempts to do it in the latest fashion. And it was a pretty Jenny that she saw in her mirror, clad in her nightgown—a Jenny more than pretty. By day she never did herself justice. She had no sense of what became her. To her a fashion was a fashion, something one had to follow scrupulously. And she was not clever with her fingers; dreadful, unaccountable things happened to the clothes she tried to make for herself, no matter how carefully she cut according to the pattern. But then, it was at night, most often, that she dreamed. . . .

They got along, the four of them; got along extremely well, really. Esther and Helen were well paid—for teachers. They'd been well educated—there had been more money when they were girls in school. Jenny contributed less than they toward the running of the house; but, even so, not much was left from her salary of twenty dollars a week. Everyone agreed that it was wonderful that Mrs. Burton managed so well, with just the tiny income from Mr. Burton's insurance money, and what the three girls gave her. But it seemed to Jenny, sometimes, that all she could think of was not the wonder, but the eternal managing.

What really was wonderful, though, was her new secret. Being Cinderella. Being able to smile, instead of losing her temper, when Esther sneered at something, or Helen got weepy, or her mother forgot that, after all, she was grown up. Being able to smile, to be patient, because she knew. She only had to wait.

Disturbing thoughts came sometimes, though. They weren't perfect, those parallels between her case and Cinderella's. Her godmother wasn't a fairy. Not a bit of it! She was Aunt Myra, her father's sister, who came to visit them once in two years or so, with the most shocking straw suitcase, that bulged, and had to be held together with pieces of string. Aunt Myra used to cross-examine Jenny about obscure pass-

ages in the Old Testament, and shake her head, dolefully, about her chances in the hereafter. Aunt Myra wasn't likely to provide dress and slippers and coach for Jenny to go to a ball! She used to purse her lips when Jimmy Hart took Jenny to the movies!

Still, if she could not count upon a fairy godmother, neither need she fear cruel stepsisters. And if ever she had a chance to go to a ball she'd take it. She would need no godmother to help her—not she!

II

BUT, meanwhile, she drifted along the dull stream of her placid life. Other girls were wooed and married, had babies, patronized her. Vaguely, sometimes, she thought of making some move to escape from the narrow bounds of her life. There was the time when Peggy West came home for a vacation. She'd gone to New York, three years before. Now she was secretary to the vice president of a big corporation, and Jenny knew she must make at least fifty dollars a week—probably more.

Peggy's clothes were the sort Jenny had always dreamed of wearing. Her hair was bobbed; she spoke a language, even, that was strange in Jenny's ears. She, too, patronized Jenny, rather, but she was nice about it. And some of the other girls she simply snubbed. She had always liked Jenny; always been nice to her. Now, once or twice, during her vacation, she dropped in at Jenny's office.

"Why, Jen!" she said once, when she had sat, watching her, during a busy ten minutes. "You're good! You really are. I wish you could see the sort of stenographer we have to stand for!"

Jenny hadn't supposed that there was really much difference between a stenographer and a secretary. But there was. Why, Peggy had a stenographer of her own! She took dictation herself sometimes, of course,

when there was some unusually important letter to be written. But, as a rule, it seemed, she just went over the mail with Mr. Truesdell in the morning, and took notes of what he said, and then dictated letters that, later, he signed.

"Why don't you come on to New York, Jen?" Peggy asked, that same day. She asked the question very much as Jimmy Hart used to ask her to go to the movies; without seeming to care very much, that is, whether Jenny said yes or no. "I could get you a job easily. You wouldn't get so much at first, but once you got in, it would be up to you, how far you went."

"Oh!" Jenny's eyes were wide. "I—I couldn't, Peggy! Leave home—mother—? Oh—and—beside—"

"Beside what?"

But Jenny didn't tell her about being Cinderella, and that shining figure of her dreams? You couldn't tell people things like that. Peggy didn't urge her.

Once in a great while, after Peggy had gone back to New York and her job and the apartment she shared with two other girls, Jenny thought of that light, careless offer of hers. She might have taken it. Jenny knew she was a good stenographer. Yes. She might do well in New York, Jenny supposed; she might go.

And so she sat and dreamed, at night, looking at herself in the mirror, blushing sometimes, as she brushed her hair. Cinderella! And, somewhere, seeking her, a little nearer every night, the radiant, shining figure of her Prince. Oh, she would wait! . . .

JENNY wasn't a bit interested at first in the talk she heard about the efforts that were being made to bring the state convention of the Fraternal Order of Beavers to the town. Even when the vote had been taken, and the convention was assured, she wasn't impressed. Committees were busy, collecting subscriptions; mak-

ing lists of rooms to supplement the two hotels; planning arrangements. There was something about the convention almost every evening in the *News*.

It meant nothing to Jenny. But one night she came upon a paragraph in the *News*. On the last day of the convention there was to be a great costume ball in Temple Hall! That was to be the climax of the entertainment of the visitors.

Jenny read that paragraph through twice. Then she sat still, the paper fallen in her lap. Her eyes were filled with awe. All the time this had been planned—and she hadn't known! She had sneered, been supercilious, indifferent. A ball—a real ball, not just a dance. And in costume! No one need know her—just as no one had known Cinderella!

With incredible swiftness day followed day in the headlong rush of time toward the night of the ball. There was something about it in the *News* nearly every evening. Masks were to be required—how she thrilled when she read that! Tickets were to be five dollars—for a gentleman and a lady. Five dollars! Only five dollars!

Jenny gave endless thought to her costume. What should she wear? She rejected a hundred ideas. One could wear things at such affairs one wouldn't dream of being seen in elsewhere, Jenny knew. One could wear short skirts—ever so short. Or even—She stood before her mirror, blushing. Suppose she did? They *were* pretty legs! She said that, almost aloud, defiantly. But she wouldn't. She knew she wouldn't. She wouldn't be comfortable. It was ages before the obvious, the one perfect idea, came to her. *Cinderella!* Why, of course!

Old rags—torn stockings—she giggled in her delight. It wouldn't cost anything, even. Everything she could possibly need must be in the big hat box in her closet where she

put things she couldn't wear, or in the attic.

The costume was ready days before the night of the ball. She tried it on, late at night, when she was supposed to be asleep. And it became her as had nothing else she had ever worn! Her hair fell loose, like a little girl's; it was caught up with a wisp of old, frayed ribbon. Through the torn places in her bodice her shoulders gleamed white. The frayed skirt, all in rags and tatters, fell half way between her knees and her ankles. For dancing slippers she found an old pair in the attic that had been patent leather before mice had eaten them, long before the soles had been worn out.

But that very night, as she posed before her mirror, a thought came to her that attacked her happiness as a tiny worm begins to eat an apple it will soon destroy. With whom was she to go? Who would ask her? Anyone...?

Everyone was talking about the ball now. Everywhere costumes were being planned. Every day some girl announced, with a studied carelessness, that Tom or Dick or Harry had asked her to go. But never Tom nor Dick nor Harry had said a word to Jenny!

Jimmy? Jimmy Hart? Oh, she thought of him! And before long she was praying that he would ask her, hinting, even, growing shameless, as the time drew near, and she was desperate. Why had she never thought of this? In all her hopes, her dreams, her fears; no possibility so ghastly as this had ever dawned upon her. Suppose she could not go! Suppose that after all her waiting she must sit at home that night, and know that her chance had come, and that she—but, oh, she wouldn't! She couldn't!

Jimmy! Yes—but he'd never have the five dollars! She laughed, hysterically, as she thought that. Suppose—suppose she asked him? Offered to pay? But her cheeks grew

crimson. She couldn't. It would be—oh, like wearing some shameless costume. Girls did do such things, she'd heard. But she couldn't. And, beside, he'd tell. You couldn't trust him. He'd tell, just as he'd told of kissing this girl and that. Ugh! No.

She did do terrible things. Called at the homes of girls she scarcely ever went to see—girls who had brothers. Someone had said that if you fixed your eyes on someone and wished tremendously hard for them to do something, they'd have to do it. But when she tried that on Hammy Wilson, Cora's brother, he just fidgeted, and then asked her, finally, what was the matter with his clothes.

The morning of the ball came, and she was desperate indeed. Until, just before noon, she took five dollars from her purse, and sent the office boy to Temple Hall to buy a ticket, just as if Mr. Stewart or Mr. Baker needed an extra one at the last minute. Her face was white; her mouth was set in a hard, straight line. She was going. She had to go! . . .

FRANTICALLY, all afternoon, she made and remade her plans. Thank heaven, everyone at home went to bed early! No one need know; once they were asleep her mother and her sisters slept like the dead. She could wear her long raincoat over her costume. Her hair? She'd manage with a shawl—oh, somehow, she'd manage.

She would have to walk to the hall. A cab was out of the question. But she could wait until a lot of people were going in, and mingle with them, just as though she had driven up with someone, and he was fixing something in the car. Thank heaven again—there were two tickets, one for the gentleman, one for the lady. She'd just have her ticket in her hand and murmur something, as she went in, about her friend's coming in a moment. And then, when she was on the floor—ah, then she wouldn't care! . . .

III

THAT night she thought they'd never go to bed. But they did go, before ten. She sat in her room, then, holding her breath, listening. She was undressed; her hair was down. She could hear Esther and Helen moving about in their rooms. Then Esther went waddling by her door and downstairs for something she had forgotten. But soon everything was quiet. She opened her door softly; stood, listening.

The house was full of queer noises she had never heard in it before; it creaked and groaned; as she stood, trembling a little, she wondered if it were warning her, pleading with her to go to bed? Outside, somewhere, a dog howled; a prowling cat lifted its voice. She tiptoed down the hall; listened at her mother's door, and at the other doors. She could hear heavy breathing. All right!

Back she went; feverishly she dressed herself. But, hurried though she was, she was careful. No treacherous pin was entrusted with a responsibility too heavy for it to bear; there was no tuck that might come out. She tried on her mask; fairly danced before her mirror, for all her fears, when she saw how she looked. No one could know her; no one. . . .

There were a dozen cars at the curb when she reached Temple Hall. She put on her mask; everything went as she had hoped it would. No one noticed her; there was no need to say anything at all as she went in. Inside someone kept saying: "Ladies' dressing-room this way, please." She went on in. There were plenty of girls and women she knew, powdering, fussing with their masks. But she saw that no one recognized her.

She could hear the music now; they were playing a riotous one-step. As she went out her feet were in time with the drums. For a moment, in the entrance to the ball room, panic seized her. It was like plunging into cold water to go in. But then she

heard a whistle; realized her luck. They were dancing a Paul Jones.

"Ladies in the centre! Gentlemen form a ring around them—move to the right!"

Breathless, laughing, she let herself be carried with the rush to the centre of the room. All the gay picture was before her for an instant; streamers, the riot of color of the costumes; the men, circling about—pirates, Indians, Chinamen, cavaliers. Again the whistle blew; a man seized upon her, whirled her off. A cowboy—she knew him. Hammy Wilson! She laughed.

"Gee! About time my luck changed!" The cowboy was plaintive. "Every bum dancer gets into a Paul Jones—and I bump into 'em all! Wish I could keep you! Gee—you can dance, all right—"

She just laughed, low in her throat. Of course she could dance! Ham Wilson might have found that out long ago if he'd tried.

The jolly, old-fashioned dance went on, through its simple figures. She thought the music would never stop; wished it wouldn't! Others beside the cowboy were marking the buoyant lightness of her dancing. She was letting herself go; for the first time in her life, almost, she was just being herself.

Ever and again the whistle blew; the figure changed, and partners with it. Now Jenny, with a quickening of her breath, began to understand that the men were seeking her; she saw the struggles, the races half across the floor, with herself as the goal; the way a clever interposition of arm or shoulder gave one man or another the victory. How she laughed! Sometimes she knew her partner; sometimes he was a stranger.

Three or four times a tall man in a black domino secured her. He danced beautifully; their steps were suited perfectly; there came to be, just in those few minutes, an understanding, almost a little conspiracy, between them.

"I'm in luck again!" he said, as he reached her for a third time. His hand pressed hers; squeezed it, almost. She laughed. But in the same moment her spirits fell. This—oh, after all, this was nothing. How would it be when this dance ended, and men must go back to their own partners? This was just holiday. . . .

THE dance died on the last, low, languorous notes of an old-fashioned waltz. For a moment the black domino danced on with her; he stopped, then, to join those who were clapping for still another encore. Then he laughed.

"No use!" he said. "There they go. You're the best dancer on the floor, Cinderella! I suppose—I must take you back to someone, mustn't I?"

It was wonderful, the way she dared to use her eyes behind her mask!

"Must you?" she said.

"By Jove, no! When you say it that way—"

"You know you've got to hurry back to someone yourself and tell her how bored you were because you never could get to her when the whistle blew—"

But he only laughed, and tucked her arm in his. He began to make a way for them, through the crowd.

"I saw a place—" he said. "If only no one else did—!"

She let him take her. She was glowing. The dance had ended, and still—! All she could see of him was that he was tall; that, and that he had nice hands. Big, strong hands, but with long fingers, and nails as well cared for as her own. And she liked his voice, and the way he pronounced words.

"Here we are—in luck again—no one's there—"

He had brought her to a doorway, just to be seen, as it stood half open, behind some palms. It led to stairs that ran up to some small gallery, unused that night.

"Isn't this snug?" he asked.

He closed the door deliberately; sat

down, then, and braced his foot against it, so that it could not be opened. She stood looking down, hesitating. It was almost dark on the stairs; the faintest of lights came from above. He put out his hand and drew her down to the step beside him. It was narrow; they were very close to one another.

"Ah!" he said. "Mind if I smoke?" He threw back the hood of his domino; took out a silver cigarette case; waited, smiling.

"Of course not!" she said, after a moment. She had been looking at him, in the dim light. She had been sure all the time, of course, that she had never seen him before. Now she could see how—how different he really was! Different from the men she had known all her life. Cities, travel, the sophistication of a wider, fuller life had stamped him. He lit a match for his cigarette; in it she could see better. Eyes set a little close together; straight, clean cut features; thin lips; a curious softness about his chin. She had seen men who looked like him in the movies; seen them making love, conquering great obstacles, sweeping all before them.

He held his case out to her with a sudden gesture; laughed, but pleasantly, when she shrank from it.

"Sorry—I forgot where I was!" he said. "About all the women I know smoke, you see—"

"I—I never wanted to," she said, on the defensive, suddenly. "I would if I did."

"Of course—Cinderella!" Even his mockery delighted her. "Won't you—?" He touched her mask. But she drew away.

"Please—" she begged. "I can't—I mustn't—please—"

"Oh, quite right! And will you disappear at midnight, too, on the last stroke of the clock?"

"Of course!" she laughed, nervously. "I'll have to—I can't unmask—"

"Better and better!" He reached his hand down; before she guessed

what he meant to do he lifted her foot and took off one of her old, worn slippers. "I'd better take this now," he said, gravely, with twitching lips. "You might not lose it as you ran, you see—"

"It—it's loose enough to fall off," she said. She looked down at the foot that he still held. Thank heaven those old silk stockings hadn't had cotton feet! "But—my feet aren't like Cinderella's—"

"They're perfect," he said. "I hate girls who look as if they'd jammed them into shoes that were too small for them! I'll bet those feet will take you anywhere you want to go!"

"I wish they would!" She sighed; looked at him. He took her hand; held it close for a moment.

"They will," he said. "You're the sort to get to places—"

"Oh! What do you mean—?"

Her vehemence startled him, so that he laughed. She thought he would laugh at anything—and that one would never mind his laughter.

"Why—you do things when you make up your mind you will, don't you? Get them, when you've just got to have them? Like the way you came here—tonight—"

He must have seen how she turned white, first, under her mask, and then flushed, darkly.

"I—how did you know—?"

"Silly! I only know what you've told me—or let me see! You are here alone, aren't you? You wouldn't be sitting here with me if you weren't. And I saw you when you came on the floor. You didn't look around, as you would if you'd been with anyone—"

She drooped; she was ashamed.

"I—I thought—I hoped—"

She did not feel his arm about her, drawing her up.

"I love it!" he said. "Little Cinderella—running off to the ball! It's simply corking. I was—oh, Lord, you'll never know how bored I was until you came along!"

"Really?" Her courage was com-

ing back; she looked at him.

"Really!" He smiled back at her anxious little frown. "Cinderella—if you're really going before they unmask, I'm going with you! You'll let me, won't you? Promise—or I won't give you back your slipper!"

"I—why—if you like—"

"Of course I like! You—" He kissed her, suddenly. She caught her breath. His arm held her close now; one hand was stroking her shoulder. "You—darling—" He kissed her again. Not as Jimmy Hart had kissed her; not as she had ever been kissed before in all her life. Her cheeks were burning; her lips awoke; struggled a moment to be free; surrendered then. Her head lay on his shoulder.

They sat there, very still; their voices hushed. Through the closed door came the sound of the music, softened, distant; the hum of voices; the sound of gliding feet. And they sat still, his arm about her, his lips seeking hers, from time to time, gently, tenderly. . . .

She was very shy, later, when she must face him in the full light. Only her mask saved her. They danced again. Never had she known what dancing might mean! And then—but midnight was too near!

"I—I must go—" she said.

"Right! We'll dance around to the door. Get your things—I'll be waiting for you—"

She was still masked when she came out to him.

"It's not far to walk—" she said.

"We'll make it far!" he said. "My car's across the street—"

She closed her eyes for a moment. His car! To go motoring with him, in the moonlight! If only they could know—May—Cora—all of them! Then he was covering her with a light robe, to keep the dust away. They sat close together, in the low, swift roadster; he touched a button; the engine sprang into clamorous life; the car began to move. They were silent as they drove through the

sleeping town. But when they were out on the Caxton pike, under the waning moon, he stopped the car. With a swift movement he snatched her mask away.

"I knew it!" he said, triumphantly.

"Why—you're lovely, Cinderella!"

He kissed her to seal his compliment. And now her lips had ceased to shrink from his; she gave him kiss for kiss, frankly, joyously, like a child.

They drove on, along the moonlit roads. Everywhere there were flowers; honeysuckle bloomed in the hedges; they passed houses covered with great clusters of climbing roses; the fragrance of the June night was all about them. It was he who turned back at last, with a sigh.

"Back to your pots and pans and your scullery, my dear!" he said. "But it won't be for long! Soon I'll be going back to New York—and then—"

She nestled close to him, her eyes closed, dreaming. But then she opened them to look at him, sitting beside her, his eyes fixed on the road ahead. This was no dream. This was real. And yet it matched the stuff of all her dreams of years and years. Cinderella—and the Prince! . . .

So little she knew about him—and so much! That he was in town, at the Smith House, for a few days, on some business errand. He had been bored; the ball had offered some faint hope of amusement; he had gone. She knew his name—Ralph Morrison. . . . Jenny—Jenny Morrison. She blushed as she thought that. Jenny—Jeanette. She'd kill them if they ever told him she'd been christened Jane! Jeanette. Jeanette Morrison!

They spoke in whispers as she guided him toward her house. The car ran slowly, silently, the engine throttled down; stopped with the engine still running, purring, like some great cat. He leaped out; lifted her down; held her close in his arms as he kissed her for good night—good night!

"Tomorrow night," he whispered. "You'll come, sweetheart? I'll meet you—oh, outside the station—about half past eight? I'd better not come here—families don't always understand, do they—Cinderella?"

At the way she laughed for answer he must kiss her again. The moon was gone and the darkness that comes a little before the dawn had fallen upon that night when Jenny looked from her window to see the way that he had gone.

IV

He was waiting for her that night; he laughed, gaily, with a consummate amusement, when he saw her in the harsh light of the great arc lamps outside the station. Swiftly they sped through the town. Out in the open, friendly country, where there were none to see, he stopped beneath an overhanging apple tree, and kissed her. He held her close a moment, then:

"Take off your hat," he said, and laughed, then. "Oh, Jenny—let down your hair! I want my Cinderella back!"

She blushed as she looked at him. But she obeyed.

"You shall have it cut, when we get to New York," he said. "Oh, Jenny—never wear your hair all tight about your head—all fussed that way." Again he laughed. "What fun it's going to be!"

They drove on. But it was early still when she told him they must turn homeward.

"Last night—they didn't know I was out, you see, and they wouldn't know if burglars came, once they're really asleep! But tonight—they think I went to see one of the girls, and they won't sleep until I'm home—"

He turned the car about at once.

"Little Jenny—!" he said. "Poor little Cinderella! But I've got news for you. You needn't ever hurry home again! I finished my business today—much sooner than I thought

I could. We can start tomorrow evening—"

For a moment she was speechless, staring at him. Her heart beat so that it hurt, and she put her hand over it.

"But—oh—can I—can I be ready so soon—?"

"Oh, ready! We'll make Caxton by this time tomorrow night. And you can buy whatever you need there in the morning."

"But—but—" She didn't quite know how to say it. "Would there be time for us to be—married?"

He was not driving fast, but the car swerved, sharply. She looked at him, startled, suddenly, by something she felt. And she saw his eyes, and the way his lips grew tight.

"Oh—! Why, Jenny—I—"

She sat perfectly still, rigid, staring at him, until his eyes fell.

"Oh—!" she said. He could scarcely hear her. He stopped the car; turned toward her.

"Jenny—listen—" he said. "I—you know—marriage—I've never thought—"

"You—you mean you wanted me—you didn't mean—you didn't want me to marry you—?"

"I—you were so sweet—the other night—Jenny—I'm crazy about you—I swear I never thought—one way or the other! But I can see—of course we'll be married—"

"No," she said. She slipped to the ground; she stood and looked at him, with her great eyes, as if she wanted always to be able to remember him.

"I mean it—I thought you were like the rest—"

"No," she said again. "If—if you could think that about me—feel like that—"

"But, Jenny—don't be silly—it's all right now—get in the car—"

"No. I—I'm going to walk home—please—"

"You're crazy! You can't! I'll drive you straight home if you insist—"

"Yes," she said. "I—good-bye—"

"Jenny—you can't go like this—I love you— What are you going to do?"

"I—I don't quite know," she said. "But—I—I think I'll go to New York. A friend of mine wants me—I—good-bye."

"You hate me now, Jenny. But—"

"No. I don't hate you. Good-bye—"

"I won't let you go—" He sprang down and seized her in his arms, and kissed her. And she stood still, supine, unresisting, until he let her go, and took a step away from her.

"Oh, Jenny—" he cried. "You— you mean it—"

"Yes," she said.

"I'll find you!" he cried. "Wherever you go I'll find you! I'll make them tell me here—"

"Will you?" she said. He couldn't read her eyes. "I wonder—"

And then, without another word, she began to walk, away from him, homeward. He followed her a little way, pleading with her at least to let him drive her home. But she would not, and presently he left her, and went back to his car, and she heard him driving furiously away.

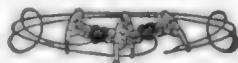
AND she walked on. Tears were running down her cheeks now, but

soon they ceased. For she was thinking; not dreaming any more, but thinking. She was awake; awake all over. She had been ashamed, but now she held her head high as she walked.

She was remembering. Remembering how, for years, she had dreamed, waiting, dreaming, content in her dreaming, content just to wait, doing nothing. Waiting for a prince to come! Now he had come—and gone. And if again she found her prince it would not be by waiting! . . .

She would act now! She would go to New York. Ralph! He had said that he would find her. And she believed him; in spite of everything she believed him. She might have yielded to him just now, surrendered to his arms, and—oh, and been married tomorrow! He had meant that; he had told the truth; she knew. . . .

There was a faint sound down the road that suddenly became a roar. Next instant the snorting roadster pulled up beside her in a cloud of dust—and then, before she knew it, strong arms were enfolding her—a voice was murmuring in her ear—"Darling! Darling!"—and Jennie—Cinderella—knew that her dream had come true.



IT is the woman who usually instigates the man to marry. Yet still more often it is the other woman.



A WOMAN, on the eve of matrimony, thinks of the future; a man, of the past.



MEN are most comic in love when they are most tragic.

That Baby Maria

A slashing yarn that ends under the glaring lights of the Garden prize-ring, where two sleek-trained battlers struggle for the LOVE of a GIRL.

By E. Franklin Abbott

MAZZINI'S was an exclusive hang-out. Slummers sometimes peered at its forbidding green blinds and got a thrill out of the wish to penetrate into its notorious interior. No uniform but that of a navy lad was ever seen on that street. Below, over the basement, hung a depraved gray sign-board marked "Billiards," and a single gas-jet tore a yellow gap of light across the grated window behind which hard, wooden faces could be glimpsed, turning intently across the visible corner of a billiard table, and vanishing in the blue fog of cigarette smoke. Above ranged the discreet windows of The Chink's.

Mazzini's always bore the aspect of a deserted rendezvous. Sometimes a silent figure could be seen leaning against the darkened front, with a cap pulled diagonally over arrogantly drooping eyelids. The figure would linger with that idle air hinting of unsavory goings-on, and somehow vanish.

Down the street floated the muffled drone of a jazz band like a curiously solemn ritual. A young pug would swagger in, swinging the door wide, and the light and din of Mazzini's would strike with a sudden blare against the empty dark of the street. The steady blurr of voices, the regular, metallic surprise of the kettledrum, the merciless glare of the chandeliers, and the monotonous frenzy of a violin had an intoxicating impact; one seated oneself at a table with a dazed, warily expectant air.

Something was always ready to happen at Mazzini's. A girl would stop laughing, a chair would scrape, a table overturn—someone would be sprawling across the floor; the door would slam upon an ejected visitor, and in a moment the band would resume its subdued riot of syncopation.

GUIDO POGANI glared across the bridge of his violin from the rear of the hall. A heavy hatred lurked in his fine, deeply ambushed eyes. He played absent-mindedly. Desperation shone like a bright sweat over his youthful brow.

Mazzini, suave, rotund, nude-skulled, passed at his elbow. Just then Bella Mazzini leaped from a side door. With arms outstretched, she faced the cabaret while the sensuous ague of the shimmy swept expertly from her olive shoulders to her circling thighs. Then she kicked her way down the aisle between the tables. Guido lifted his bow and struck up the "Miami Blues." Her carmine smile parted and she lifted a hoarse contralto above the sound of the violin. Guido regarded her with ferocious disdain, and thought of Maria—Maria with her slight, silent gaiety, her Sicilian smile and heartrending silver voice.

Mazzini's gaze spread across the scene and he emitted a growl of contentment. Business was good. Bella passed him, and he caught her by the ear.

"Look at Guido, sweetheart!" he

whispered, "he's so mad—and thirsty. Give him a drink."

She caught up a glass, filled it, and swayed confidently to Guido's side.

"*Caro mio*," she murmured with exaggerated sweetness, "drink and let us be friends!"

Guido frowned and turned aside, dark with aversion.

"Go 'way, you—!" he muttered and bit his lip.

"Forget!" she whispered.

He stared vindictively at Mazzini without dropping his bow.

"You will not drink?" cried Bella. Her arm flashed, and the wine dripped down Guido's face.

He wiped his face with his sleeve. It was smeared with red as though with blood. Guido turned with surprising deliberation. He leaped at her. She fell away, tripping against a table. Mazzini strode to Guido and towered over him with a livid face. The ready bouncers dragged him to the doorway. Six hustling arms were about to toss him ungentle into the street. The door was blocked by a lean, casual-eyed pug before whom they halted respectfully.

"Leave him to me," he drawled; "I'll take care of him." Mazzini, close behind, caught the fish-like calm of the pug's eye.

"Slim Jerry!" he frowned, retreating. "Whatta he want?"

"Sit down, Guido," said the pug.

"To hell," said Guido, "I go away!"

"First we talk."

GUIDO gazed down at the table. Candid tears appeared in his eyes.

"Mazzini an' Bella—dey bring my girl Maria from Sicily. Bella wanta make love—she maka me sick. Mazzini wanta me to marry Bella. I come to dis countree, an' play jazz—for Maria. Now no more jazz, no more Maria—she live in dat bum Mazzini's house."

He laid his hands upon the table. They were big hands, powerful and broad. The fingers were lean, muscular and sensitive. He brought a fist down upon the knuckles of the other

hand with a violence that made the table dance.

"No more study—— I play too mucha jazz—for Maria."

"Listen," said Slim Jerry, bending forward, "you know this here Jackie White? He comes every night to Mazzini's, and now Maria is his girl."

Guido looked up with an astounded scowl.

"Whatta you say?"

"Mazzini keeps it quiet—he's afraid. But he give Maria to Jackie White. Jackie told me himself. She likes him. He is rich—he is the Bantam Champ. Next month he fights in the Garden and makes five thousand dollars."

"You tell me lie," said Guido.

"It's the truth," said Jerry.

Guido did not stir for half a minute. Jerry waited.

"If you tell me lie . . ." Guido lowered his head and fixed Jerry in his stare. He raised a fist that swayed eloquently back and forth.

"You'll see," said Jerry, "I tell you no lie."

Guido was silent.

"Look here," said Jerry suddenly, "you come with me. We make money—a hundred dollars—a thousand dollars—five thousand! Then you take Maria away from Mazzini and Jackie White."

"Whatta you mean—maka money?"

"Fight!"

"Who—me?"

Jerry nodded.

"Remember when Bill Kenny kidded you and you swat him? I was across the street. I thought it was your finish. Kenny's an old pug—been fighting for six years. But you dropped him in two minutes. I laughed. 'I'll remember that boy!' I said. In my place I'll teach you how to fight—you'll clean up. What do you say?"

"I dunno," mumbled Guido, "I no lika fight."

"See here—I know a fighter when I see him. I've been watching you. You'll make a pile of money—then you take Maria back. No more jazz—you study fiddle all you like—and you take Maria away from Mazzini!"

"I dunno!" said Guido.

THE door opened and a girl stepped in with an air of timid bewilderment strangely alien in the harsh brilliance of the cabaret air. In the sour tang of wine and tobacco smoke she stood breathing a barely sensed fragrance of vineyards, a distant hillside aroma. She had the frail rich beauty of those dark blossoms that grow for brief seasons on high mountain slopes. Behind her entered Jackie White, lithely built, arrogant, poised, with even gray eyes and the discernible manner of a professional pugilist. A flicker of gaiety was in his smooth, hard smile; he gazed with the air of one accustomed to homage.

Guido turned in his chair and rose.

"Maria," he cried joyously.

She shrank, startled, against her escort. Jackie White turned in surprise. He stared unruffled into Guido's face, taking its astonishment for fear.

"What's the matter with you?" he queried evenly.

Guido ignored him.

"Maria!" he whispered, "what you do here?"

Maria blanched and dropped her eyes.

"What's eatin' you?" growled Jackie White, "what's the idea?"

"Eh!" cried Guido, roused, "whatta hell!" and stepped forward.

"Hello, Jerry," said Jackie affably to Guido's protector, "what's eatin' the dam wop?"

Guido darkened, and drew back a menacing fist. Jackie glanced down at him, amused. He lifted a broad, contemptuous paw, thrust the open palm into Guido's face, and sent him staggering backward against his chair. A guffaw went up from the adjoining tables. When Guido had scrambled to his feet, astonished and raging, Jackie White, with an arm around Maria's slight figure, was striding calmly toward the rear of the cabaret.

Guido yelled and rushed after them, and in the brief uproar a dozen arms tossed him gaily through the front door.

Outside, roaring and choking in un-

intelligible Sicilian, he regained his legs, and Slim Jerry dragged him off to his quarters.

"I fight," Guido wept at last, "I fight heem—right away—I fight 'em all—you taka me to your place!"

Slim Jerry smiled in the darkness, an arm around his shoulder.

"That's the stuff," he repeated, "we'll show 'em, kid—we'll show 'em what you're made off!"

II

GUIDO gazed hungrily across the bare gym walls.

"Who's the wop?" queried a deep-chested youth emerging from a rub-down.

"Want to know?" said Jerry, "I'll introduce you. Get the gloves."

"Oh, I see," he answered, "initiation, eh?"

Stripped at last and in fighting togs, Guido stood awkwardly while Jerry himself fastened on the gloves. A newcomer was an event, and the boys had gathered from all corners of the gym. One of them burst out laughing.

"Why don't you give him a pick and shovel? Look at them arms and legs."

"Watch yourself," said Jerry. "I don't say he ain't green, but he can hit you as far as your home town."

Guido squared off proudly, ignorantly; his arms wide, wrists turned in, with lowered head and legs planted wide. The young pug, known as "Red" McDowell for the auburn mop that graced his flat brows, stepped before him and mimicked his gladiatorial air.

"Cut the picnic," warned Jerry, but he could not restrain a grin. "Damn it but he's green!"

"Red" danced in, and for a full minute mauled Guido nonchalantly from head to navel. Guido took his punishment, stubborn, perplexed, groping toward the slippery figure before him like an astonished beast feeling the sting of a bewildering whip. His fists cut whistling circles in the empty air; into each swing he threw the last ounce of his strength; he wielded his arms like

an axe, grunting like one felling a tree, and staggering with the weight of his own blows. He had regarded the young pug's lithe figure contemptuously; he could not make it out; the strangely elusive fists struck him from nowhere. Dizzy with the hailstorm of blows, he was more in grief than in pain. He felt vaguely that they were making a butt of him.

"But I fix you!" he muttered as he caught a lightning jab across the mouth; and then, somehow, striking blindly, his arm caught "Red" about the neck in a frantic embrace. Red had ducked forward to evade a blow, and that was a fatal error. Guido knew nothing of ethics or regulations; crushing his man to his breast with the grunt of a locomotive, he shot his left arm like a piston to "Red's" impending jaw.

"Feel better?" Jerry mocked solicitously when "Red" finally blinked and opened his eyes.

"The dam wop!" said Red. And that was how Guido was initiated.

WORD spread that he had put "Red" to sleep without an hour's training, and he gained instant respect throughout the gym. But Guido felt no surprise. He would have been more astonished if it had not happened. In the simplicity of his mind, his prowess had never been questioned. Jerry could not make him understand the need for all the rigmarole of preliminary training to which he was now introduced.

"Jackie White," he protested endlessly, "you say I fight him—right away!"

Jerry patiently explained again.

"Jackie White is the Champ. Nobody can fight him till he licks everybody else."

They were all alike to Guido. Mysteriously aligned against him, they appeared a vast conspiracy to keep Jackie White from his avenging fists. With his innate docility and good nature he allowed them to take him in hand, a clumsy, massive-shouldered youth with perplexed brows. Morning after morning, they scrubbed him, trotted him, coddled him like a prize colt.

"Whatta dis for?" he protested, and learned to jump rope, with a shame-faced grin.

"Atta boy!" glowed Jerry, watching him hit the bag and catch its rebound cleverly on the point of the elbow. Guido took to the bag like a famished young bear to honey. With either fist, he could make the walls rattle. The boys began to pay more attention to him, and to comment on "the wop's" wicked left.

Noting the rapidity with which Guido was taking on true professional form, Jerry regarded him with increasing elation. Finally he got it into Guido's head what it was all about; and Guido yielded himself body and soul to the gym. Then Jerry had his hands full to keep him from overtraining. Guido laughed at his hovering solicitude, his warnings, explanations, threats—but obeyed.

The image of Jackie White's face was before him, woke him in the night, lifted him to his feet at dawn; it was his food and drink. Maria had receded to a poignantly distant wraith of despair. It was as though she had vanished, and life was only the ferocious thirst at his throat and the sharp mist in his eyes when he thought of her. He no longer stormed Jerry with questions about when he was going to fight. With set lips he went silently through the daily work-out and waited for the promised day.

Jerry laid his plans and said little. When they mentioned The Wop he referred to him as a promising youngster. He figured that a season of prelims would bring Guido to the twelve-round class in short order. Then he would be good for many thousands the first year. After that—who knew? He was too long in the game to forget that the most promising material could prove a fiasco. But he was eager for the chance.

He kept Mazzini's visits secret from Guido, and finally Mazzini no longer appeared at his door. Jerry had taken full possession. Guido literally ate and slept in the gym. Under his direction he was innocently, unquestioningly immune to the outer world.

ONE morning Jerry searched from one end of the gym to the other—but for the first time since his arrival Guido's handsome shoulders were not on the scene. In a moment he was at Guido's quarters. He slipped inside. Guido was face down, prone across the little table, torn with deep raucous sobs.

"Hey, you big kid," Jerry cried, dragging him to his feet and swearing at the distorted features smeared with great tears, "what's hit you? What kinda man are you? Quit bawling!"

Guido was suddenly silent. He pointed to the ground. Jerry glanced down at the shattered fragments of a violin.

"Dis morning," Guido mumbled, "I wake up and go to my violin. I try to play *La Giatoma*—de song Maria love. An' I can play no more!" He lifted his broad palms with stiff, outstretched fingers.

"Too much fight—no more good for violin," he muttered. "I go mad—till I keel dis Jackie White."

"That's all right, Guido—you will be a great fighter. When you clean up Jackie White, you'll be rich. You'll buy a new violin and play all you like."

Guido shook his head.

"I kiss de violin good-bye an' smash her on de wall. All right, I cry no more. Come on."

Jerry drew an arm around him and they strode back to the gym.

"Tonight," said Jerry, "I'll take you to the Rink Arena. You see how the pugs fight. Next week I'll put you on for your first bout."

Guido regarded the huge wooden structure, where the Rink Sporting Club staged its fracas, with sullen indifference. The merciless light beating upon the harsh sea of faces, the high bare walls draped with flags, the subdued, dramatically expectant rumble of voices, held no interest for him. It was all part of the dully insistent monotone of preparation for the moment when the waiting ferocity that nibbled at his heart would tear loose.

III

THE night he climbed through the

ropes for his first professional encounter, he did not even raise his eyes from the gray canvas underfoot. The edge of his dressing gown trailed in a smudge of blood, and in his heart there was no aversion. His pulse beat a dull rhythm to the words, "Jackie White—Jackie White" and he heard and saw nothing else. When the gong struck, he finished off his man mechanically, hardly aware of Jerry's ecstasy when a towel flapped into the ring to save the other man from slaughter.

His career as a "prelim" was even more brief than Jerry had hoped. Bout by bout, he outclassed them. He rarely heard Jerry's hurried last words at the ring-side. Eyes down, unsmiling, he would wait for the bell—then step from his corner with the unhurried directness that won him the title, "The Sure-Enough Wop." There was no subterfuge in his style. He still clung to a hint of his early manner. All traces of awkwardness were gone, but he fought like a woodsman felling a tree—with the straight, matter-of-fact vigor of an unhurried workman doing a good job. With a physique trained down to a polished, olive symmetry—sleek, hard, resilient and apparently inexhaustible—he had developed a left of shattering speed—and his right, as far as the pugs matched against him were concerned, was equally effective.

"All dis maka me sick!" Guido growled. "When do we git to Jackie White? You been kiddin' me, Jerry!"

Jerry laughed.

"Look here, Guido. This month we're beginning to see real jack. You've got a thousand dollars in the bank yourself. Everybody says you're a big ticket. What are you kicking about?"

"All righta da money. I clean up dese here pugs for you—now bring me Jackie White. No more foolin'—I'm gettin' tired!"

"Jackie White fought six years before he got a chance at a title bout. He lost twice—it took him eight years to be champ. And you want to meet him in six months. Don't be a fool."

"Aw—you maka fool of me. If I

fight till next Spring—you promise me Jackie White?"

Jerry thought it over.

"If you lick Benny West and Lefty McKenna and Philly Jones—I'll get you Jackie White—maybe by next Spring!"

"By then," he added, "we'll have a cold five thousand laid away for the guarantee—and the title bout is good for ten thousand cash apiece."

"I donna giva damn," muttered Guido, "I wanta hurry up."

"When you lick Jackie White, you'll be rich, Guido—and that baby Maria will kiss your hands."

Guido scowled.

"Never minda Maria. Minda-your own dam beezness."

"No offense, Guido. I meant well." . . .

THE months slipped away, and when the streets were muddy with vanishing snow, the sporting pages were featuring the spectacular new contender for the bantamweight title. Photos of Guido's handsome frown, sketches of Guido in fighting trim. Phil Jones, the one remaining contender, had been eliminated in six brief rounds by Guido's splintering left. Sporting circles were agog with the lightning career of Jerry's find; sporting writers were yelling unanimously for a title match.

Jerry was in golden spirits, and they were well earned. It had been no bed of roses to bring Guido to the first rank within one feverish year. And now, with the championship scrap in sight, Jerry was emerging to the forefront of managers. He spent months of sleepless nights, hobnobbing with promoters, pulling wires, hopping into sudden trips for interviews half-way across the country, burning the telegraph wires for hours on end—till he found himself smothered in Guido's embrace and assuring him again that the contact for the big bout with Jackie White was absolutely bona-fide, no joke.

Guido finally emerged from Jerry's new training camp among the Hampshire hills—hardly recognizable. There was no visible trace of the emotional

young wop that had wept in the street outside Mazzini's cabaret.

The staggering climb from total obscurity to fistic prominence had laid its paw across Guido's features. The wooden stolidity of the pugilist was in his brows and jaw, dulled and hardened by the interminable milling of gloved knuckles. His eyes had congealed to an icy steadiness. His bronzed forehead seemed compressed by the merciless obsession that had tightened on his brain—the consuming obsession of his hatred for Jackie White, that had grown with every month to the monstrous proportions of a maniacal compulsion. Every pug with whom he had bartered blows, had been a mere ghost of Jackie White. Every victory had left him with a sickening sense of having been cheated.

Battered through the hammering months by innumerable fists, his face had assumed that leathery, opaque harshness which marks the undeniable pug; he looked at the world out of a pair of transfigured pug eyes. The broad paw of Jackie White that had shoved into his face that night at Mazzini's had marked him. Jerry's managerial tactics had added the finishing touches. Unwittingly, Guido's hatred for Jackie White had fashioned him to his likeness. He was a superbly thoughtless fighting machine, eating, sleeping, breathing the scent of leather, wet towels and the sweat of battle. He lived on the garish light that cut a roped-in square in the midst of a sea of howling faces; on the merciless impact of glove and muscle; on the gleam of set faces and the flash of arms; on the dull ache of fatigue, the grunt of exertion and the clang of the merciful bell.

THEN, on the eve of the big bout, Guido felt a vague surprise at his inability to rouse himself from a slow invasion of indifference that crept through his mind and drowsed in his limbs. Jerry noted it with a pang of misgiving.

"Is he fought out?" he wondered. "Has he gone stale?"

Perhaps he had rushed things too much. According to every tradition,

Guido was, after all, unusually green, with all his record knockouts. Throughout his phenomenal career, Jerry had observed in Guido a certain air of dazed surprise, as though he could not comprehend what was happening. He walked through his victories like one fighting through the crazed realities of a dream, like one struggling toward some sudden awakening.

Jackie White was a veteran who knew every refinement of ring tactics, he knew how to play his man till he could time every step of the game. He was one of the fastest and shrewdest boxers that had ever held the title—and Guido was only an extraordinary battering-ram with a cool head and an instinct for in-fighting.

In his apartment the night before the big mill, Jerry glanced at his watch, hiding a worried look.

"By this time tomorrow," he announced, "the bantamweight title changes hands—eh, Guido?"

"I feel lika it's all over already!" said Guido morosely.

"Queerest kid I ever saw," muttered Jerry. "I know what's eating him."

"Red" Mullen caught him up.

"Hurry up and spill it," he said. "I plunked down a sweet five hundred on him this morning."

"He's cracked," whispered Jerry, "cracked as any bird that ever pushed a glove. You don't know the half of it. He's tired, that's what it is—tired of dreaming about what he's going to do to Jackie White—he's been moping over it too much—ever since he handed you the fade-away when I walked him into the gym." He bent closer and whispered: "It's that silly skirt of his—Maria! If it wasn't for her—do you think he'd be squinting at the championship tonight? It wasn't me that made a slugger out of him—it was that baby, Maria!"

IV

THE hour arrived. Guido listened absently to Jerry's final instructions. He climbed to his corner, under the familiar

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light that beat down upon his sullen forehead. The tides of faces swept to the square ring, packed in tiers to the draped walls. The dim hatred which he always felt for the roaring inundation of eager heads woke the anger in his blood again. To him they were the alien world, intruding on his hatred, goading him on, delighting in the tragic onrush of his victories. They knew nothing of the nibbling despair in his heart; if they knew he would feel the humiliating jibes of their derision. They paid to see him fight; he felt inarticulately that they had bought him, that his final reckoning with Jackie White did not belong to him but to them.

Jerry was poking him eagerly in the ribs.

"Guido, old boy, here comes Jackie White—down the aisle—to the right. Look who's with him! Mazzini—and Maria—they've got ringside seats—coming to cry at Jackie's funeral, eh!"

"Maria?"

"Sure enough! There they are—the whole gang."

Guido glanced down among the restless faces and caught a misty glimpse of the frail, strangely familiar figure of Maria. Then he fixed his eyes again upon the canvas at his feet. He heard the roar of voices, the scraping legs and the applause as Jackie White was lifted to the ring. Below, he was aware of the shining dome of Mazzini, bobbing into his seat at the ringside, with the silent, shrinking figure of Maria at his right. Guido kept his eyes rigidly before him, then trained them suddenly upon the face of Jackie White.

White was eyeing him with a carefully casual air. Then he caught Guido's cobra-like stare, and he glanced aside with a brief scowl.

They were being announced. They were in the center of the ring. They posed a moment; the cameras clicked. Then, back at their corners, they waited that infinitesimal instant before the bell. When it struck, it struck something inside Guido, as though someone had switched on a thousand lights.

WHITE was half a head taller; he gleamed fresh and hard in the strong light. Guido's arms pawed at him lightly, expectantly, with assurance; as though he were placing him carefully where he could rip at him at his ease. White, formidable, quick, easy-limbed, stepped before him with his lean, powerful reach, fencing him off cautiously.

Then Guido struck in, while White edged off in a semi-circle around the ring.

"Keep close," Jerry had warned, "your stunt is in-fighting; don't let him keep away!" but Guido did not intend, for once, to follow instructions. With Jackie White before him, his native hunger for immediate slaughter awoke and swept aside the months of science.

In his old, deliberate, unsmiling manner, he stepped in, striking with both arms, indifferent where he struck, swinging wide again as in former days; he was again a ferocious woodsman swinging a six-foot axe. Jackie White edged toward the left, and Guido walked into a stinging right jab between the eyes. The crowd roared, Guido wavered. White's left crashed to his ear, and Guido's arms dropped. Wrapped in a red mist, he grinned suddenly, taking the rain of blows that followed, like one baring his head to a hailstorm. The house was on its feet. Guido heard it above the singing in his head. Then he found himself, and almost too quick to be seen, his arms tore in two streaks to White's body. His gloves crunched against the flesh, and White wrapped him round and hung on. Guido was struggling to free his left from White's desperate embrace. The referee wrenched them apart. From that moment it was Guido's round. The crowd was vociferously ecstatic; it was a live fight; Guido's onslaught and White's defense made lightning action.

In the brief respite before the second round, Jerry yelled himself hoarse, while Guido laughed.

"Next round I finish heem," said Guido, spitting gleefully while they rubbed his arms.

"You poor boob," roared Jerry, "he

almost got you—right at the start. Go slow and work close, or he'll murder you, d'you hear?"

"He give me all he had—and it didn't hurt!"

"Listen, Guido—you follow my orders—or I throw in the towel in the next round!"

"Den I keel you!" said Guido calmly, "Jackie White belonga to me. I fight him how I like."

Jerry choked with disgust.

"The dam wop!" he mustered, "clean off his nut!" He saw his dreams go up in a puff of smoke. He had studied Jackie White for years, and was dead certain that without generalship Guido had no chance against him. But he had a maniac on his hands; Guido was bent on suicide, and he was helpless.

In the second round Guido did not keep his word—Jackie White was far from "finished." With the after-taste of Guido's body blows to make him more wary, he kept him at arm's length, and he found that Guido could be hit at long range. Guido stepped again into a few stiff reminders that he was not hammering at a novice. The third round found White as fresh as ever, while Guido's panting could be heard across the ring. Guido rushed him again and again, and each time White slipped away; he was taking no chances, and saving his wind. Then he found an opening, and caught Guido with a dozen rattling hooks that rocked him against the ropes till the bell rang.

Guido tried to shake off the weight that was coiling itself around him, creeping through his head and smothering his arms and legs. He had spent himself recklessly. A confused joy growled in his breast; it seemed to him that nothing mattered. The circling frenzy of blows, the crash of his limbs against the limbs of Jackie White—in these he was consummating his vengeance. The speechless hate of all the lost months blazed at last in the sting of bruised flesh. But he could not understand how it was that Jackie White was still before him, still taking his blows, still stepping deftly out of every on-

rush, still lashing back with both gloves. The precious rounds were passing, with Jackie White still on his feet! . . .

For three more rounds Guido tore after a more and more elusive Jackie White. But something within him was holding back his speed, dragging at his arms, clinging and darkening his vision—and he did not know what it was. The glimpse of Maria—perhaps that had had something to do with it. He had no time to think. But under the heat of speeding muscle, the bitter emptiness of a year of sullen grief yawned again. Sorrow was behind Guido's sweeping arms and straining legs, robbing him of power, clouding the precious clearness of his sight; he seemed fighting himself more than Jackie White; he was thrashing frantically to free himself from a sort of stupor, as though he were drugged and struggling in a dream. In his corner waiting for the start of the seventh bell, he whispered a prayer and gripped himself for a more desperate onrush.

Jackie White had decided this time to change his tactics. He leaped to meet him, and no longer edged away. His patience was gone, and he opened up with all he had; the round would go to the hardest hitter. He met Guido's rush in the center of the ring; they stood squarely and slugged. Something happened that electrified the crowd; Jackie White, too, had thrown caution to the winds; he met Guido blow for blow; their arms flashed back and forth for fully half a minute. Guido began to give way. Step by step, he backed away to his corner till he pressed against the ropes. Jackie White had waited for this moment; now he towered magnificently to put over the final wallop. Without an effort at defense, Guido stood under the trip-hammer blows, striking regularly with left and right, panting hoarsely with each laboring jab; and the pang of gloved fist on flesh could be heard twenty rows away. Going down in defeat, Guido gloried and struck away under the blinding crash of blows; he crouched and shot methodical, heavy, infinitely slow, unwilling, weakening arms into Jackie White's ribs. . . .

It could not last. Guido felt the ground seesaw under him; the vast arena was a whirling merry-go-round crashing about his eyes and ears. Far off in another world, he felt his arms working regularly back and forth; and through a fog as thick as night, heard rather than felt the pounding of fists that rocked his head. A jab to the wind; a grunting cough shot from his vitals, and he tottered against Jackie White, with helpless, wavering arms and sinking knees.

The bell saved him. He lay against the ropes in his corner, deaf to Jerry's frantic admonitions, hating the sickening stuff they thrust against his nostrils, quivering under their busy hands—and he knew he had lost. It was all but over. Another minute, and he would walk, bruised, swollen, reeling through a lurid mist, into the iron rain of Jackie White's final blows.

"Only two more rounds," howled Jerry in his ear, hoping frantically that if he lasted they might yet stage a comeback in a return bout—but Guido's shattered ears could not make sense out of the sound of his voice. He was waiting for the impending bell, to walk into annihilation.

A MIRACLE in the next round postponed the end. A wild left swing caught Jackie White under the jaw, and in a flash Guido saw him sway and drop on one knee. Like one treading through a gale, he groped toward him, too spent to make headway. But Jackie White came back, and twice Guido was down to the count of nine. White was too eager, and was smothered under Guido's weight as he hung on till the rescuing bell clanged again.

The house was with Jackie White. He grinned from his corner, battered and victorious. The bout was his. He had a tottering victim before him, and a full round in which to polish him off. He had fought well and saved his strength; he was nodding confidently to his manager's jubilant last words on the final spurt that would score a knockout. From Guido's corner Jerry was answer-

ing the clamor of his henchmen who were pleading for Guido's sake that he toss in the towel. From his whirlwind of oblivious pain Guido caught an inkling of what was going on, and swore at them with half-closed eyes.

"Nobody stop my fight," he muttered, "I feenish!"

But he was drenched with an overwhelming indifference. From head to toe his body sang with crescendos of weariness. It was the battle of his life, and he had lost. He had stalled off the end another round; there were only a few more shattering jabs to take and it would be over.

He fought for sight, and his eyes swam through the swaying light toward Jackie White. Then he peered down through the ropes into the dazzle of faces below. They were rooting hoarsely for Jackie White, the Champ—all faces were turned on him while they blared and roared their applause.

Then, through the turgid clouds and seas of exhaustion, Guido's laboring gaze fell upon the dim, dazed outlines of Maria. He saw nothing but a tragic mist of face and two glowing eyes bent upon his mutilated, unrecognizable features. It seemed to him that she was weeping, wide-eyed and silent. Out of that vast pool of shouting faces, only hers turned toward the lacerated pulp of his swollen head. Through the descending fog that wrapped him round, he caught the frail, almost imperceptible lift of her arms, raised with a faint appeal and dropping into her lap despairingly. In the rocking darkness in which he wallowed and drowned, under the singing torture of muscle and nerve, Guido was aware of Maria. Maria had no eyes for Jackie White, the vic-

torious; she was praying for *him!* . . .

V

"EVER see a man hit by lightning?" said Jerry, telling about it later. "Well, that's the only way I can say it. Something hit Guido harder than a regiment of Jackie Whites. You could have downed me with a split hair! It happened too damned quick to be appreciated—till it was over. Sufferin' hallelujahs! When we had yelled ourselves weak as flapping fish, we still weren't sure what happened! But as Guido said himself later on, 'I dunno—I just a wake up!'"

Simple enough, isn't it? Guido woke up, that's all. The fog had vanished as though a gale had swept it off, above the heads, beyond the high rafters. With the stroke of the bell, Jackie White rushed him from his corner. Then Guido saw Jackie White lying full length at his feet.

The next morning Jerry read an account of it to Guido from the latest sporting extra.

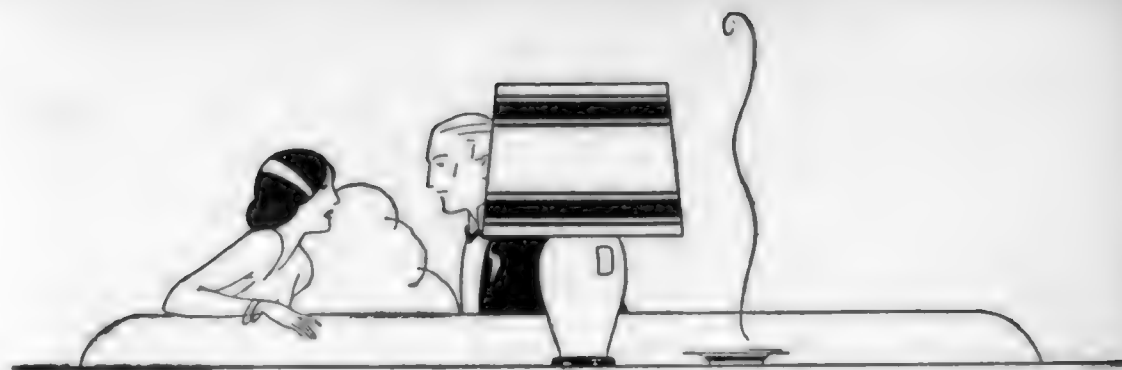
"When Jackie White rushed him in the final round," went the paragraph, "Guido startled the huge arena with a sudden, full-chested, leonine roar of glee. Wide awake, murderously swift, he met White midway with a long sweep to the jaw, a full clean stroke from the hip. It lifted White in the air; he dropped on his heels and spun round slowly with his guard down. Guido tore in with a blistering left and right, and Jackie White lay down at peace with the world, an ex-champ; while the crowd let loose in a frenzy of howls, hoots, cheers, whistles and general hysteria."

"It musta been that baby Maria done it," said Jerry.



WHO has ever known two very beautiful women to be devoted friends?





SINCE THE DAY

By Charlton Lawrence Edholm

IT was nine o'clock in the morning when Leroy opened the door to her knock. Sweet and wistful she stood in the shabby corridor of the studio building, the color in her cheeks fresh as the breath of morning air. Blinking with unfinished sleep, he stood before her.

Then, hastily, he gathered up the milk bottle, the newspaper, the scattered letters at her feet, glad of a chance to withdraw from the challenge of her eyes. They entered the studio in silence; the man embarrassed, the girl shy but determined.

Her eyes searched his workshop and living-room with eyes that showed both pity and amusement.

"Men, men!" she exclaimed. "What helpless children you are!"

He followed her glance to the tumbled couch, the disorder of sketches and studies against the walls, the cigarette ends on the floor. Then he smiled, half

*"Since the day
when first we met"
. . . so young lovers
everywhere
are wont to sing.*



THIS melody swept into the hearts of two youngsters, BOY and GIRL caught in New York's furious life-current. There were moments of divine and carefree passion and THEN . . .

annoyed, half apologetic.

"It's not always like this," he began. "I was not expecting company and so—"

"But you asked me to call—some morning?" She pouted and smiled together.

"Morning! Yes—but nine o'clock is the middle of the night."

"Then you meant for me to call at three in the afternoon? Why didn't you say so?" But there was more mockery than reprimand in her voice. For a girl so young, so fair, outwardly so unsophisticated, Claire had an

amazing poise.

Behind a screen, Leroy was struggling out of his pajamas and into his street clothes. "Well, now that you're here," he called, "let's make the best of it. In a few minutes I'll be presentable and we'll go out for breakfast."

While he was splashing and adjusting his clothes in the screened nook usually reserved for models, Claire was survey-

ing the large canvas on the easel. "I rather like your idea of the wood nymph," she observed in her bell-clear voice. "It's a lovely composition—But your model! Why on earth did you pick such a hippo? Was there no other creature in the Zoo?"

Red-faced and heated, Leroy came from his shelter, buttoning his collar.

"Hang it! You are certainly cool! Last night I met you for the first time. This morning you wake me from sweet dreams and begin on my picture as if we were old friends!"

He surveyed the picture, standing at her shoulder while he knotted his scarf.

"By George! You're right though! The first sketch was something ethereal, spirituelle.—But when I got Alda to pose, the vision vanished and the flesh was all that remained. It's just a study of a naked woman."

"Not bad as a study," observed Claire critically. "A fat lady doing reducing exercises in the forest," she added maliciously.

THEY had breakfast at a little French pastry shop that afforded coffee, brioche and omelette for two. They discussed the uptown studio party where they had met. They had danced together. He had brought the cocktails to a darkened nook. Accidentally his hand had grazed her breast, and with a swift, irresistible impulse their lips met and clung. The cocktails drenched her light dress, and as he sat beside her the fumes of alcohol filled their nostrils. Then he gave her his card—asked her to call—and when he said good night, kissed her once more—this time just an ordinary kiss.

Leroy remembered now why he had taken her home. She was the hostess, of course—the model sculptor, who had given the party.

As if she read his thoughts, Claire said abruptly over her coffee cup, "Jorgenson's all cut up at losing me! I

packed my trunk before I left this morning!"

"The deuce you say!" Leroy jerked upright and stared at this strange girl. "Why? What—?"

"Fed up!" She answered coolly. "Jorgy's a regular married man. Fire-side and slippers is what he's meant for."

"But the party! That was fairly wild—"

"Yes, he gave the party for me. I coaxed him. But he didn't belong in his own party. He's a tame, domestic cat. I'm an alley cat. At least I want to be when I'm with such people. So I packed my trunk and here's my key."

She held it up for Leroy's inspection.

He looked at it with some astonishment, then amusement, then there was a stirring of last night's madness.

"Tell the expressman to deliver it to my diggings," he laughed. "There's room for a trunk in the alcove.—And (as the hero or romantic situation declares) I'll sleep in the kitchenette with the door locked from *your* side."

Her face was like some shy flower of the wood—but her laugh—her laugh was *gamine*.

II

WHEN they returned to his studio after smoking all the cigarettes, Mrs. Flanigan was just finishing tidying up and Alda was removing her second stocking behind the screen.

The model came out, buxom and confident in her nudity as she heard the artist's voice, then retreated blushing at the sight of the cool, blonde, well-poised Claire.

"No work today!" said Leroy, carelessly as he could make it. He dug into his trousers pocket and produced a moderate roll. "Here you are, Alda," he said, extending a bill around the edge of the screen. "Run along. I'll give you a ring when I want you again."

Though Leroy had held this sturdy,

warm-hearted young woman in his arms, he dismissed her as casually as if she were the charwoman. Leroy was like that. Women shuddered at his brutality, yet they could not leave him alone. Abashed and silent, Alda finished dressing, while Claire smoked a cigarette and adjusted the phonograph. The march from "La Belle du Bois Dor-

water to her touch; his armor of indifference, of experience, of protective cynicism was torn from him. The primitive woman in her was far stronger than the artist in him. Leroy, for that day at least, was existent for her only.

When the apartment bell rang, she made him ignore it. When the telephone jangled she choked the bell with



"But you asked me to call—some morning?" She pouted and smiled together. . . .
"Morning! Yes—but nine o'clock is the middle of the night," he responded.

mant" jingled a rollicking goodbye to Alda's exit.

But the moment the door closed behind her, Claire stopped the machine, swiftly bolted the door and in a flaming second wound her slim white arms about the painter and was clinging to him.

The cold dispassionate man of a moment ago was swept off his feet. Like a straw, he was whirled in the wind of her passion, kindled in the flame of her desire. His muscles were weak as

a bit of paper. When there was a tap on the door, she held a slim hand over his mouth. Breathless they remained until the footsteps trailed away. He was her amazed and blissful conquest.

It was dark, drizzling, chilly when they finally left the studio and sought a table d'hôte where both were unknown. They ate steaming minestrone and everything else that was set before them. They ate ravenously and drank deep draughts of the forbidden Chianti.

Then they slipped back to the silent studio. Her trunk was in the hall outside his door.

"How did that get here?" Leroy asked. "When did you order it sent?"

"This morning at seven o'clock," laughed Claire. "Oh, small child of my heart, I was sure there would be room for my wee trunk in your studio."

THROUGH the long evening Leroy lay back on the couch watching the dancing light of the log fire flicker on the ceiling. He was drowsy, blissfully contented. Claire half reclined beside him, letting her slender fingers trail through his shock of hair now and then. She was wide awake, eager, soaring on rapturous wings, but she did not even try to carry her dreaming lover in this flight. She adapted herself to his mood. She left him for a moment and once more went to the victrola, searching among the records as if she knew what she would find. The record she chose was a familiar one, that debonnaire, -passionate song of youthful love, "Since the day . . ." from "Louise," Charpentier's opera of Bohemian Paris. It is a melody that soars, rapturous and gay, flouting the humdrum world, known to young lovers everywhere as the yearning, carolling expression of their own happiness. It was played by some inspired master of the violin.

Its honeyed sweetness seemed to saturate Leroy's brain and drug it. He dreamed that he was in Paradise and when his sleepy eyes half opened and found hers bent upon them tenderly he felt that his dream was true.

III

THE next morning he went to his work like a young giant. Never had he painted with so much enthusiasm, such verve, such inspiration. Claire posed for him and the fresh canvas seemed to take the lines of her supple figure as if it were sensitized. He worked with no burden of labor. She posed as if she were a bird in flight. For both of them that morning's work was rapture. And

after the light failed there was rapture of another sort.

From the first hour Leroy had realized that this was no eternal Paradise. He foresaw that such ecstasy was doomed to end by its own intense quality. Mortals are not made to endure such transports for long. But for many days—how many he forgot to count, the painter and his miracle-sent mistress worked, loved, ate with keen delight and then by the firelight relaxed blissfully and listened again and again to the seduction that was in the melody from "Louise." It seemed as if that sensuous air were woven into the brilliant fabric of that period; as if the rhythm of it entered the pulse beat that drove their blood.

And so the picture was finished.

BUT even before that, Leroy knew that the end was near. She was not satiated—far from it! That he sensed, and yet the knowledge could no longer stir him. It was he, the strong man, whose fire had been drained by this slight girlish creature, a creature of inexhaustible vitality.

One morning he awoke and found her place cold and empty. He sprang up alarmed and as he saw that her scattered effects were no longer visible, a feeling half of irreparable loss and half of relief came over him. His rapture was over. The knowledge left him with a gone feeling in his heart, but he also knew that his reason, his career and perhaps even his life was saved.

Such intensity of existence, such work, such love, such zest for the commonest acts of life as eating and drinking, could not endure.

In a way he was thankful that she had not descended to the banality of writing him a letter. There was nothing, not even a hasty line scratched on an envelope. It was so much more final and complete, this good-bye of hers. And she had thrown her dainty little garments, her comb, her array of vanities into the trunk. And had locked the trunk! There it stood locked and

strapped with an unassailable air of finality.

It was an ugly little trunk. He would be glad when it was gone.

The expressman called for it when Leroy was at breakfast, but he would have been too proud anyway to make inquiries as to its destination.

But he stooped and placed his hands on the spot on the floor where that square little trunk had stood. His hands rested there as if they had been upon her firm little shoulders. The place where she had been, even the spot where anything belonging to her had been, was inexpressibly dear to him; yet he believed that he would never see her again. He knew that he would never try to.

He did see her again. But it was the best part of a year after these wild days and nights that he heard her voice on the telephone. It was the same telephone that she had gagged with paper when it threatened to disturb their love. Her voice was unchanged; clear, bell-life, half caressing, half mocking.

"I'm going to be married," she said. "Yes, dear, I take the fatal step tomorrow. No, I'm not glad and I'm not sorry. I always intended to marry some day, and I'm sure I've found a man who is just right—just right for me to marry."

Then before he knew it Leroy was saying "Yes" to her most absurd proposal. He was to be a guest at her wedding. He was to be one of the very few guests. He was to meet her husband as an old, old friend. And when she said good-bye to him after the ceremony, that was to be their last good-bye. . . .

Just as on the morning when she came to his studio, Leroy was like wax in her hands. She took it so thoroughly for granted and he could not say "No."

So the following evening found him at the little church of a thousand romances, and Leroy saw his wood nymph lay her hand in the strong capable hand of the man who was to be her husband.

Without envy, without cynicism, but with a strange feeling that such things could not happen, Leroy saw the ceremony through, congratulated the quiet-spoken, well-poised young engineer who had won this amazing girl, and then acted on a sudden impulse.

"As I am such an old friend of your wife," he said, "let me have a very great privilege. You are going to Japan on your honeymoon and it may be a very long time before we meet again. Let us spend the few hours before the train goes, together. I know I am asking a great deal. You would like to be alone with Claire but—"

There was a shade of pathos in Leroy's voice. "You will be alone with her so often. Be my guests tonight at dinner."

The bridegroom assented. He even smiled pleasantly as if he were charmed with the idea. As for Claire she looked at Leroy with an odd expression that made him wonder. He thought to himself, "That girl *willed* this! She put it into my head this thought of inviting her and her husband to a farewell dinner."

THE painter called up the head waiter at a Fifth Avenue hotel where he was well known, engaged a private dining-room and ordered a dinner. He prided himself on his ability to select food with discrimination, and he was determined that this farewell dinner should be perfect. He sent a special message to the chef. His orders regarding the wine were explicit. The private dining-room he had specified was almost like a studio. It was a large place with shaded lights and an alcove for musicians.

When the party arrived at the hotel even the impassive young engineer was astonished at the elaborate preparations for this farewell. When they entered the private dining-room they were greeted by the soft harmonies of a string quartette. A small table stood near a fireplace where logs were blazing cheerfully. The lights were subdued,

the service was noiseless and discreet, the dinner a work of art.

When the waiters had retired, leaving the guests to their coffee, liqueurs and cigarettes, the bridegroom remarked: "Mr. Leroy, I had no idea you painters were in the habit of entertaining like millionaires."

"Oh, I live like a millionaire when I'm flush," answered Leroy. "My 'Wood Nymph' won a prize in Philadelphia and sold for an ungodly sum to a Pittsburgh plutocrat. So, for the time being, I'm a plutocrat, too."

The painter glanced at Claire, but if she felt any embarrassment at the mention of the picture for which she had posed, she did not betray it. Languidly she was smoking a cigarette in a long jade holder; the blue smoke trailed from her nostrils, her eyes were half closed.

With a start Leroy remembered that he had seen her like that time and again before the flickering log fire in his shabby studio, sensing the aroma of tobacco, luxuriously tasting the after flavor of love as some slender tigress might taste the after flavor of blood.

She was sitting between the two men. They had all settled together on a low, easy davenport beside the fire and were looking at the softly glowing logs as if the three were studio intimates, as if they had all known each other for years.

From the alcove could be heard the tender strains of the violin and 'cello. Claire's sinuous form relaxed ever so slightly and the warmth of her shoulder struck through to his arm as Leroy felt her weight upon him; just for a moment as it had been in the old rapturous nights.

There was wild honey in her voice and a tang of something bitter, too, as she murmured to Leroy: "Ask them to play 'Since the Day' from 'Louise.'"

THE artist looked at her with sudden surprise. Why was she doing this; awakening one glowing memory after another? Why was she recalling those passionate days in the studio, when he

was a struggling, poverty-stricken painter and she a model—and more?

But he arose to speak to the musicians, reluctantly leaving her for a moment while he stepped behind the screen of palms.

When he returned the husband was no longer there. Claire looked up into his questioning eyes with a smile at once saucy and tender. "I told him I had a headache," she explained, "and sent him to the drug store for aspirin."

As Leroy sank beside her on the davenport, the violins and 'cello took up the old and well-remembered air, once more filled with its haunting, yearning melody the room where as in the past, two lovers embraced. Leroy had supposed the fire was dead, that the ashes were cold beyond the possibility of rekindling, but at the contact of her warm arms and the lingering perfume of her lips he knew how wrongly he had judged himself. His heart beat furiously as in the old days; the pulse throbbed at his temples, he could feel the blood in his eyes, he heard his voice husky and strained as he spoke to her in broken words. "Claire, my darling! What a fool I was to let you go!"

"Do you mean that?" she asked slowly, intensely, as her eyes searched his.

"Mean it? Yes, yes, that and a thousand times more than I can tell you! I'm mad about you! I never loved you before as I love you now."

"Kiss me," she breathed.

In that long kiss was all the rapture of their days and nights together; the essence of that bygone lawless love seemed crushed between their hungry lips.

Abruptly Leroy tore himself from her arms and started to his feet. "Quick, quick," he gasped. "Your cloak! Throw it over you and come this way—by this other door. We can get away before he comes back."

"What do you mean?" She regarded him with real astonishment.

"I can't give you up. I won't," Leroy declared. "I was a fool to let another man marry you—but he shall not

possess you. No. We will get out of here. Go to Canada. Take a steamer for South America, anywhere! Come. Before he finds us here."

"And your career?" she asked. "Your honor? Your friends? Your family?"

"Trash, all trash! There is nothing but you in all the world."

In the madness of her kiss and the intoxication of that melody of love Leroy seized the woman, as if to carry her off by force.

But her glance restrained him. It was not cold—but neither was it yielding. It was tender but infinitely sad.

Slowly she disengaged his hands from her arms, the arms that a moment ago had enfolded him.

"No!" she said. "I do not want to go with you." And her words sounded the knell of his hopes. There was finality in that crystalline voice. A blow in the face would have been less chilling to his desire.

"You do not love me?" he choked. "They why did you do this? Why did

you lead me on? To torture me?—oh, you she-devil!"

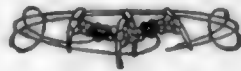
"Not that, lover of my dream days. Not to torture you. To test my one great love. That is why I did this—to be sure that our love was pure gold—not brass."

"What are you saying?"

"To assure myself that the memory I shall always keep of you is the memory of lasting love—not of some passing fancy. I was not sure. Now I know. You are safe in my heart. Forever."

She kissed him swiftly on the brow as he sank over her hands, then drew away from him—her well-poised self again. She was just in time. Her husband entered hurriedly with the little package of tablets, and asked anxiously, "Your headache? Is it worse, my dear?"

"No," said she, with a grateful smile that seemed all candor. "There was a little ache, but now it's gone," and her hand touched her heart for a moment before it rested in her husband's palm.



Dinner à La Mode

(In terms of conversation)

By André Saville

	The weather	
	Wall Street	
Bootlegging	Prohibition	Home-brew
The seaside	Divorce	The mountains
	Cabarets	
	Mah-Jong	
	Jazz	
	The latest risqué story	



DIVORCE is an escape from a little barrel into a little bigger one.

No Luck

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

AS Loreen strolled up Broadway, she growled because she had no luck. Of course, anything was likely to happen, for she was in New York, the city of millionaires, of thrilling adventures, of colorful wickedness.

She had read in the newspapers of the vices and evils of the gay thoroughfare, of the pretty, painted butterflies that had their brief moment of popularity in the bright glare of the Great White Way.

Loreen knew that she was lovely; her mirror told her this every time she looked at it. Suppose some wealthy man became infatuated with her! Idly she imagined herself in a beautifully appointed apartment, furnished by a master interior decorator; she had stunning gowns, automobiles, a maid, servile, discreet, clever, jewels worth a fortune. How Loreen wanted to be a frivolous, foolish damsel!

Wandering toward her came Terry Gorham Hunt, multi-millionaire, man about town, generous, impressionable. He was able to buy anything he wanted, willing to pay well for shapely feminine charms. He had a Park Avenue apartment, momentarily without an occupant.

He saw Loreen. She was young, fresh, unspoiled, with a delightfully innocent air. He liked her. He thought of the Park Avenue apartment, temporarily uninhabited.

"Little girl," he said to her, blocking her way, "may I speak to you for a minute?"

Loreen observed this gentleman, with his quiet gray suit, his ancient eyes, his fatherly appearance. "A vampish old married man!" was her mental comment.

Her open white hand came around swiftly. She slapped him twice before he recovered from his surprise and fled to the safety and concealment of a passing taxi.

"The old bum!" Loreen muttered. "That'll teach him!"

Sighing, Loreen continued her walk. The trouble was that she didn't have any luck. How she wished that a wealthy guy would try to persuade her to become a carefree, joyous, frolicsome damsel! . . .



A MAN goes to a fortune-teller laughing—a woman praying.



THE most effective lovers are scarcely ever the most sincere ones.

The Queen's LOVER

*Throbbing, pulsing like love itself, this little tale of ancient days
is like a dream picture*

By Dulcie Deamer

AMYTIS, the young Queen, was unable to sleep. For an hour she had lain alone, watching the golden starpoints that pricked the peacock-blue of the profound, soft abyss of the night. One side of the chamber was open, save for a row of narrow columns, between which the stars were visible. The night was as hot as fire, but there was a little stirring of bland air, for the house of the young Queen was upon the summit of a terraced, garden-girdled hill of enamelled brickwork, and all the city lay outspread below.

Now the full moon, round as a shield and honey-colored, was rising. The stars vanished, and light that was like a lovely ghost of noon-day crept inward between the columns.

Amytis drew herself upright upon the broad, low bed. Like a child she embraced her slim knees. She was very young. Her soft dark hair, mingled with threaded pearls, was dressed close to her head for coolness. Her garment was of silk, transparent as water, and caught with pearl brooches on the shoulders. The soles of her bare feet were stained with vermilion; tassels of pearls hung from her ear-lobes, and she was perfumed with myrrh. She was unable to sleep owing to her thoughts of a certain man—a slave. . . .

One moment she was angry because she entertained such thoughts—and

the next moment she was angrier because this man, this dog guarding her footstool, must certainly regard her as a jewelled goddess-image and look questioningly instead upon the girls who carried her fans and fly-flappers and played upon the harp for her.

Amytis was sixteen. For a year she had been one of the queens of the Great King. She could appear very dignified on occasion; her height increased four inches by delicately carved clogs of ivory, her slight loins weighted with ropes of pearls, her breasts netted in webs of pearl filagree, and a train of ostrich feathers falling from her shoulders. But now she embraced her drawn-up knees, amazed at herself, angry, and rendered so unhappy by the hot beauty of the night that she desired to weep.

Incense smouldered. Rose-leaves had been scattered upon the bed. The honey-colored moonlight was like silent music enchanting the senses. Amytis made a little writhing movement. In a sudden flash of revolt she wished that this man could be blotted out from the world of the living. . . .

A shadow fell between the columns. At the doorless threshold of the chamber, with all the breadth of the lightsome night behind him, ap-

peared the tall figure of a man. He advanced a step or two with a sort of rigid caution, and then half turned. The amber of the moon bathed him from head to heel. There was something Egyptian in his profile. He was beardless, and his smooth black hair, upon which lay a sheeny glint like onyx, was cut close to his head. Therefore, all would know him instantly as a slave. He was naked save for a girding of leopard hide, and was shod with leather sandals. The fingers of his right hand were clenched about the hilt of a bright bronze knife.

Amytis continued to sit upright clasping her knees, but her breathing was suspended. The evoker of her sleepless thoughts was before her. . . .

The man who had turned towards the glory of the moon again faced the incense-dusk of the chamber. He seemed to draw a deep, heavy breath. His knife-hand went up, the point of the blade directed inward towards his breast or throat. He stiffened.

The agile, bare-footed girl who was Amytis, the young Queen, straightened her limbs and sprang clear of the bed with a movement nervously swift as that of a trained dancer.

She was upon the man before he had time to strike, catching his knife-hand at the wrist with both her own. He gasped, and for a long moment they stood mutually frozen. Then the knife dropped. The ringing clatter of its fall seemed a terrible sound in the listening, light-drenched hush of the night.

"Why were you going to strike?—why?"

The voice of Amytis was breathless. She should have asked "What are you doing here?" but such a question would have been altogether absurd to her at that moment.

"Oh, Queen. . . ."

He appeared unable to say anything further. Then he spoke rapidly.

"Call your guard. I cannot ask you to forgive me. I was going to kill

myself, here, at the threshold of your chamber, because . . . I love you!"

He set his lips together after the last word as though he should never open them again, remaining perfectly motionless like a person who has uttered his own death-sentence and waits for the sword to fall.

Something seemed to snap in the breast of Amytis—some constraining thong. Quite involuntarily, and with the utter simplicity of a woman whose soul has been stripped suddenly naked, she laid her arms about the neck of the man, raising herself a trifle to do so, for he was much the taller.

"I love you," she said.

"What!"

He uttered the word almost as though she had picked up the knife that lay at their feet and had stabbed him with it.

Amytis began to tremble like a person with ague, and strength left her. If the arms of the man had not upheld her she would have slipped to the floor.

"Oh, gods!—if you had done what you came to do!—Oh, gods!"

Both were trembling. Their hearts, only separated from each other by the living garments of their bodies and by the veil of silk that ensheathed the girl, were beating like the wings of startled birds.

"You are the Queen," said the man. "I—I should not touch you. . . . I worship you!"

His low voice halted.

But Amytis clung to him as to a strong pillar in a temple of safety, her throat choked with sobs. Scarcely had she dreamed it possible to experience such happiness!

The man gathered her up to him, and softly and quickly entering the chamber, laid her down among the cushions of the bed, seating himself upon the edge of it, and with a burning reverence kissing her hands and then her feet.

"I must go," he said. "I cannot

bring shame upon you . . . you are my goddess!"

"You must go," said Amytis, who had drawn herself upright and cast her arms about him like a mother. "Oh, gods! I cannot bring death upon you!"

It seemed to each that they had found the whole world, with all the beauty and fever and peace of it, in each other. Though they had never before exchanged words, each was as familiar to the other as a second self, and yet as strange as a miracle. Somewhere far away the low roar of a lion in the royal dens was no more than a muffled pulse-beat of the beautiful blood-warm night.

The broken whispers of the man and the girl ceased, for the slave at last kissed the lips of the young Queen in that exquisite and shuddering silence which is the very heart of the flame of love. . . .

II

THE mellow moon was declining toward its setting, and a delicate smouldering haze was drawn across the face of the night. In the Queen's chamber there was a thick darkness impregnated with the odor of incense, of rose-petals, of cedar and of sandalwood. Silence . . . And then approaching sound—footsteps, and a growing line of light beneath the heavy, gold-wrought curtains that masked an inner door. A pause—doubtless to receive the salaam of the dumb negro eunuchs stationed beyond the curtains. And then an unpreluded chord of tinkling and resonant music from swept harps.

"The King!"

Amytis's voice was sharp yet stifled. She had been immersed in love like a drowned lily in a lake. There had been no time, no death, no fear, no bond or free—no anything but love. And to awaken with this dreadful abruptness to actuality was worse than death.

The man, her lover—her other self,

as it had seemed—spoke instantly—quick, low and masterful.

"Scream—cry for help. Cry out, my dearest—you must!"

She obeyed him as a child might. He was the lord of her life—of her soul and body.

"Ah!"—a cry that seemed to flutter in the throat. And then "Help me!"

The golden curtains were torn apart. The light of perfumed torches streamed into the chamber. The sinewy figure of a male slave leaning across the broad cushioned bed was instantly visible. He appeared to be endeavoring to strangle the utterer of the cry.

There was a shout, a forward rush, and the attacker was wrenched backward by a dozen hands. Amytis, struggling to her knees in the midst of the bed, her dark hair a confusion of scattered tresses, her eyes dilated like a terrified antelope's, her shoulders and bosom bruised, flung out her henna-stained palms.

"My Lord—my Lord, the King! Command that this man shall not immediately die! Death is too swift, my Lord! He must die through hours, days—a life of deaths! It is my right to devise his tortures! Let him be taken away, and unharmed by any—let him live till the morning to meet my slow revenge!"

There was a breathing silence. The torchlight glittered in the dilated dark eyes of Amytis, in the bloodshot eyes of the negroid guard, that resembled those of crazed cattle, in the agate-grey eyes of the tall, wide shouldered slave who held himself like an athlete, his carved lips set firmly together.

"You shall have your will," said the heavy and rather guttural voice of a fleshy, thick-necked man, gorgeous as a high priest, whose full beard was elaborately curled, and whose hair, parted in the middle and sleek with oils, fell to his shoulders.

I—embrace my Lord's feet!"

Amytis's throat contracted. She

swayed, and then cast herself face downward upon the disordered bed.

III

It wanted less than an hour to dawn. The moon had set and the stars were misty. The hollow, rumbling roar of lions in the royal dens became more frequent. Sweetly and poignantly a nightingale sang in the terraced gardens below the alabaster houses of the queens and concubines—so poignantly that any waking listener might well believe that the bird's pulsing breast was pressed bitterly against the thorns of the white rose its own blood would dye to amorous red.

By the brazen door of one of the King's dungeons two coal-black fellows squatted with drawn swords.

"He will be impaled upon a sharpened stake and left to die of thirst in the blazing sun," said one.

"He will be mutilated, blinded, deprived of his hands and feet, and cast to the wild dogs," said the other.

Down the flight of hollow-trodden stone steps that led to the dungeons came a woman shrouded in trailing purple veils and bearing a little silver lamp. The two guards rose up, nursing their swords. The woman lifted the veil that was before her face, and they saw that it was Amytis, the young Queen. They bowed their heads. She was pale as ivory, and her eyes were like midnight wells in each of which a single fixed star is reflected without a tremor.

"I desire to enter," she said, "and look on your prisoner, and tell him of that which will be prepared for him in the morning."

They inclined their heads again.

"He is chained, oh, Queen. Stand off from him, and you will be safe from his hands."

They unbarred the brazen door, and Amytis entered. At her word they closed it upon her and squatted

again upon their haunches, one on either side of it.

With the clang of the closing door, Amytis raised her silver lamp and looked. The place was like a den rough-hollowed for beasts. The air of it struck her like a blow in the face. Upright by the farther wall stood the man whom her own mouth had condemned to death with the coming of the new day that in less than an hour would be born. His wrists and ankles were shackled to rings of bronze, the length of the chains allowing a foot or two of movement. He was looking toward her with a steady gaze.

Amytis put down the lamp hurriedly upon the rough floor and moved straight to the captive. In a moment more her arms were locked about his neck, and his chained hands pressed her to him.

"Oh, my darling! I had to speak as I did, or they would have slain you with their swords before my eyes."

"Hush! . . . Whatever death I die is a payment so small for the riches of this night that I am almost ashamed to suffer it."

"Don't speak of suffering, or I shall go mad! But there is one door by which we can both escape."

She drew from its resting-place between her small breasts a long, narrow phial of onyx.

"Dearest, there is death for us both in this, and without pain."

Instantly the hand of the captive closed over hers, and she yielded the phial to him, for he was her master.

"You must not die," he said softly.

"I command you to live. Live and be happy—you are my heart, and I command my heart to be happy! I shall wait in the darkness, and when, after the years you enter it, your first step will bring you into the circle of my arms. . . . My heart, my life!"

With a quick movement of withdrawal from her he unstopped the phial, put it to his lips and drained it.

Amytis uttered a cry of sharp pain. She clung to him, her face washed with tears.

"Tell them that I had some poisonous herb concealed in my belt," said the captive quickly, "and that, overcome by fear of torture with which you threatened me, I swallowed it. . . . You shall not suffer through any suffering of mine, my heart."

"You are leaving me!" said Amytis with lips that shook.

"It is better. . . . But if life darkens, follow me. I shall wait."

He swayed on his feet, and the sudden sweat glistened on his forehead. Amytis's arms were about him. Exerting all her strength, she upheld him, for his knees weakened and his head was against the hollow of her shoulders.

"Remember . . . be happy . . . or if it darkens . . . follow me. . ."

"My dearest . . . my life . . . my love . . ." gasped Amytis, and it was as if her very heart broke on her lips. . . .

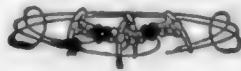
Abruptly the dead weight of the man slipped sideways and he fell, lying crumpled, his lax arms sustained by the chains that had held him captive. The girl knew that he had left her. She stooped, picked up the empty onyx phial and replaced it between her breasts. She must

obey him. There was nothing else to be done. His will dominated her utterly still, as it had done from the moment of their first full kiss. . . . Carefully she veiled herself, raised the silver lamp, and knocked upon the brazen door. It was opened immediately.

"The prisoner is dead," she said in a cold voice. "He had a poisonous herb concealed upon his body, and being afraid of the tortures of which I spoke, he swallowed it."

Slowly she mounted the steps. The daystar blazed in a misty sky paling to amethyst. The muffled roaring of the captive lions in their subterranean dens was like sea-surf or far-off thunder. The day was coming up in blood and gold, but beyond the day there was always the night—the night of love. Somewhere a young child cried, and a sudden thought like a knife-pang pierced Amytis. . . . Not yet would she enter the night where love waited with arms outheld. There was about her a possibility—a just born, miraculous wonder like the first conception of light in the subtly thrilled womb of darkness. . . .

She was tired—her heart, her mind, her body. She would lie down among the cushions of her bed, and weep softly for a long while, and then sleep.



In the Park

By Muna Lee

A LITTLE pool, a handful of silver water,
And through the dusk, lamps like a hundred moons;
We two together, stilled pulses aware of the shadow,
Hearing the thin stream trickle its wavering tunes.

Star-glow of acacia, frail, unearthly blossoms,
And something within us that rends the breast's rampart of bone,
That rises and towers and tears through lips swiftly impassioned,
Because of a scent across lamp-smitten waters blown.

S.S.—July—9

A Matter of Time and Place

By Harris Mercier

IN the sophisticated crowd that jabbered at the afternoon tea, the girl was like a lily in a bowl of orchids. Pierson, bored by too-scarlet lips, over-rouged cheeks, and the scent of perfumed cigarettes being smoked in long, ivory holders, looked at this one girl with growing admiration. She seemed to bring the tang of a cool, green, ocean breeze into the stuffy room; she was like a curved gold moon, drifting in a cloudless sky. Someone called her "Ruth."

She was sitting in a corner of the room, out of the bustle of high-pitched feminine voices. A hard-faced, haughty deb, wise with the lore of her first season, pertly loitered before Ruth, a swagger stick in her hands. The haughty deb's stick swung to the hem of Ruth's skirt; it was yanked up a trifle; an inch above her ankle was displayed.

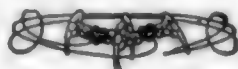
Ruth blushed, while Pierson marvelled. That a girl of to-day should be able to blush! And for such slight cause! By one-piece bathing suits, by knee-length skirts, by sleeveless gowns! A girl who could blush!

All during the rest of the afternoon, he thought of Ruth. At dinner and afterward, while en route to the theater, he remembered her. He arrived late, at the beginning of the second act of the musical comedy.

After he had found his seat, he gave his attention to the stage. A lissom feminine form, attired economically in a few inconsiderable beads, whirled and leaped about the stage in what was by courtesy called an aesthetic dance. Pierson yawned and thought of Ruth.

Not until the dance was over, and the performer appeared for a bow in answer to thunderous applause, did Pierson look at her. There was no mistaking her.

Pierson blushed. The dancer was Ruth.



Needles and Pins

By Paul Arthur Yawitz

HE loved her. At the carnival he beamed on her beauty and bought her a rose, and she carried it in her hand for there was no pin with which to fasten it to her dress.

Years later from the pages of a volume of her favorite poems dropped a flower—a pressed one. "That's just like a man," she said to John, her third husband, as she casually stooped to pick up the withered petals. "Three times I've asked you to stop at Macy's and bring me a large package of pins."



This is the Second of SMART SET'S series of Craig Kennedy stories.

Fumes of FOLLY

By Arthur B. Reeve



The famous criminologist is hot on the trail of Artifex, arch-enemy of society—a trail strewn with shattered lines and hopes. Kennedy in this story discovers

An heiress caught in the net of a mysterious love-cult.

"IT'S planted—Professor Kennedy—all this talk of wild parties—and a love cult . . . I'm the victim of these newspaper detectives. . . . My reputation—everything—at stake. . . . You—you must help me!"

Eugenia Vance was plainly unstrung. At least twice a season she was good for a full-page spread illustrated by some of her bizarre work at her studio in Washington Mews. But this was publicity of quite a different sort.

It was just nine days since Vladimir Volsky, promoter of the Siberian Oil Concession, had been found dead, shot through the side, in a studio he had rented on Eleventh Street.

The case had all the customary details that go with the shooting of an elderly man who loves the white lights—pale blue kimonos, pink silk nighties, locked doors, no trace of the weapon. And the newspapers had indulged in the usual scandal stories, into which had been dragged the name of the "millionaire sculptress," as they chose to call Eugenia.

"Of course you know that the Volsky case has been taken up by the District Attorney's office and turned over to Chester Ormsby because he knows some of the people—knows me. I thought—"

She stopped as though hesitating to tell just what she thought.

"And—I don't want Chester to think—I can't have him think—Professor Kennedy, the newspapers have just simply run amuck . . . I can tell you—I think—where you'll find Volsky's missing valet, that Chinaman, Wong."

"Where?" asked Kennedy evenly, knowing well that only by letting loose the flood of pent-up feeling would Eugenia conquer her evident hysteria.

Instead, she sprang up with a stifled scream of alarm.

"Quick! He must not see me here! What excuse can I give him?"

I saw that she had caught a glimpse out of the window of a city automobile. Ormsby himself was stepping out.

Kennedy moved over and opened the secret exit to his laboratory.

"The Old Ship Café—foot of Christopher Street," she murmured, then darted into the passage.

CHESTER ORMSBY had just been appointed assistant district attorney through the influence of Judge Pyle and I knew him slightly. Up to this time his practice had consisted mostly in the management of the Ormsby estate under the guidance of the Judge, his father's partner, in the firm that still kept the old name, Ormsby, Pyle & Ormsby. The fact was that Chester had been also somewhat of an amateur

composer. He wrote better music than he did briefs. That had taken him into many circles of curious culture.

Something was evidently not only racking Ormsby's mind, but clawing at his heart as he faced Craig haggardly.

"Could a girl—with a dual personality—murder a man—as her second self—and know nothing about it—as her real self?"

Framing the sentences with the care that a lawyer frames a hypothetical question for an expert witness, Ormsby leaned forward tensely, studying Kennedy's face as he built up each step in his hypothesis.

"If she did—would she—her real self—be guilty?"

Ormsby paused an instant, drew in his breath sharply, then went on without waiting for Kennedy's answer.

"Well, that is the problem I may have to face with Eugenia Vance. I don't know . . . sometimes she is *not* Eugenia Vance. She is another Eugenia. I think she is developing a dual personality—that the other Eugenia is absolutely irresponsible—hates me."

It was evident that Ormsby was only a degree less wrought up than Eugenia, and Kennedy adopted the same attitude to him.

"It's not only what I call Eugenia I and Eugenia II," he raced on, "but little Violet Vane, that little flapper who is sowing her wild oats, and Leonie Romaine, who owns the Eleventh Street house, Radcliffe, the writer, and Earl Hunter, the poster artist—they're all—queer, I tell you. Kennedy, have a look at them—tell me what *you* think."

It was evident that it was more than the mystery whether a love-crazed girl or jealous man was guilty. Ormsby feared it was Eugenia—and prayed it was not.

"I have a clew to where that missing valet, Wong, may be," remarked Craig quietly. "Would you like to come along?"

"You have? Where did you get it?" Ormsby was wide-eyed in amazement and admiration.

"Come along," said Kennedy tersely. We piled into Ormsby's car.

II

We were nearing the big city piers, when we turned a corner and almost ran into three other fellows.

"Hulloa—Kennedy," greeted Dunphy of the Narcotic Division, in plain clothes. "I saw you the other day with Deputy O'Connor, the day you had that queer wireless apparatus at headquarters. But didn't get a chance to speak to you."

"What are you on now?"

"I've just found that drugs—synthetic cocaine, heroin, everything—are being smuggled in by the hundredweight. They used to sneak them off the ships. We broke that up. Now they're being landed from transatlantic freighters on their coastwise trips down from Boston to New York—fast motor boats go out into the Sound and the stuff is transhipped there."

Dunphy nodded to Ormsby. "We all know," he confided, "that drug addiction is a vice as secret as the system by which the stuff is distributed. Addicts in groups know one another; agents in the same ring work together; dealers and smugglers of the same clique cooperate. But each clique, ring and group is separate and only the unseen manipulators appreciate it all. Now I'm on the trail of the man higher up—a secret agent—Dr. Heinrich Radke, at the Old Ship."

"And I," confided Kennedy in turn, "am on the trail of the missing Chink, Wong, in that Volsky case—also at the Old Ship!"

"Crossed trails!" laughed Dunphy. "Let's make it a party!"

"The Old Ship" was a disreputable looking frame building, a tavern of several generations ago, once historically famous, but now, like a decayed man-about-town, relegated to the company of those whom formerly he would have scorned. It had gone through the saloon stage, then the bootleg stage, and now a dirty sign proclaimed that only soft drinks were sold. Even that change did not seem to have done much for its respectability.

Dunphy was hastily disposing the six of us for a sudden swoop on the place from every quarter, when suddenly there came a detonation that almost knocked us flat. A barrage of broken glass from a tenement missed us by only two feet. As it was, two of Dunphy's men were cut.

Kennedy and Dunphy did not wait to turn the corner and we followed. Apparently the whole rear of "The Old Ship" had been blown out by a mysterious explosion. It looked as if only his chance meeting with Kennedy had saved Dunphy and his men.

We waited impatiently while crowds gathered and police arrived to establish fire lines. It might have been foolhardy, but neither Kennedy nor Dunphy waited long. Their reward was finding the mangled body of Wong and whatever evidence there was of the drug ring headquarters absolutely wiped out.

Dunphy was a bit discouraged; but Kennedy did not seem to mind it in the least, even if all the clues were blotted out at the very outset. We stood aside from the wreckage and Craig took advantage of the opportunity to piece together the information of both the District Attorney's office and the police on the Volsky case.

Betraying nothing of the reason, he began by quizzing Ormsby on Eugenia.

"Why," Ormsby said excitedly, "it's almost as if someone had a mental mastery over her."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, you see, she belongs to a society—the Psychoanalysis Society. I've been with them—but by Gad!—they're far beyond me—at least I mean this particular group is. Weekends they often meet out at Romaine House, a queer, mysterious old house at Lloyd's Neck on Long Island."

"Romaine House?" repeated Dunphy curiously.

"Yes—belongs to Leonie Romaine—part of the Romaine estate—almost all there is left of it except the town house on West Eleventh Street. Leonie is really land poor. She has rented out the town house for studios. That brings

in a little money. It was one that Volsky rented. But about all she had left of the personal property is an old closed car and motor boat out on the Island which she rents for the summer with the house. Neither of them would be of any use to her if it weren't that she uses Eugenia's Japanese chauffeur, Zuki, a great deal.

Ormsby scowled disapproval of the highbrow panhandling. But I saw Dunphy's ears literally go up and I knew we should hear more from him of Romaine House.

"Then there is Henry Radcliffe," went on Ormsby.

"Professor Henry Radcliffe," from Dunphy sarcastically.

"Professor of psychoanalysis, he calls himself. He writes now and then for papers and magazines—a literary lion."

Ormsby's reaction was evident as he went on.

"Leonie writes, too—she eats this psychological raw meat. Leonie and Radcliffe are having a most fascinating—er—radical romance. They're supposed to be radically married—untrammelled, and all that sort of thing. Neither interferes with the career of the other."

"La—de—dah!" with Dunphy's sarcasm, while Ormsby frowned and cleared his throat.

"There's another one, too—Earl Hunter, the poster artist. He rents a studio from Leonie, right over Volsky's."

"He's another artistic genius," put in Dunphy, "always in need of money."

"H'm," ignored Ormsby. "And little Violet Vane—alternately model and show girl—now rehearsing in a production, 'Scandals of the Studios, 1922' or something. They are also—radically married—that is, on the door of the apartment are two cards, 'Miss Violet Vane, and 'Mr. Earl Hunter'."

"Very modern," nodded Dunphy.

"But who has this control over Eugenia, do you think?" recalled Kennedy.

Ormsby hesitated.

"Radcliffe?"

He shrugged. "Perhaps."

Ormsby was cautious, almost secretive. Yet his suspicion broke through at last.

"Often," he blurted out, "when she is the *other* Eugenia—it seems to me that Earl Hunter has the greatest influence over her."

"Earl Hunter? How does Violet regard that?"

Ormsby smiled. "Radically. She has bribed Zuki, the chauffeur to watch Eugenia and Earl."

Kennedy regarded him narrowly.

"No—on my word—I didn't—I would have no use for a fellow who puts a spy on a woman's trail. No, it was Violet—and can you blame her?" Ormsby paused, his face twitching at the thought of Hunter. "And tonight," he added bitterly, "they are both going to the notorious Studio Masque Ball. I—I wish I could—kidnap her!"

"I would like to see her—at her studio," considered Kennedy. "Can you frame some excuse for me?"

"No use to go to the studio. She is working on some setting for this pageant, 'The Dream Dance,' whatever it is, that they are to give at the Masque. You'll find her there—at Helicon Hall—find them, I mean. Drop in—everybody does."

"Very well. I'll happen along—and if you hear nothing to the contrary from me, I'll see you at the Masque tonight. So long, Dunphy. If you need for anything, call on me."

III

THROUGH the maze of downtown streets, we came at last to the Helicon. Outside stood a big English car, in charge of a dapper, alert son of Nippon.

"That must be her car and Zuki," muttered Craig.

We entered the hall and discovered several people there already. From scraps of conversation I gathered that "The Dream Dance" was to be a pagan pageant, a reincarnation, a sort of road to yesterday.

At the far end of the hall I could

see a man whom I took to be Earl Hunter, standing erect, finishing a huge water-colored flat of scenery as backing to a group of nymphs and satyrs in plaster over which Eugenia in a smock was bending at work.

Unobtrusively Kennedy moved over toward the spot where Eugenia was working.

"A very effective combination of arts," he finally remarked.

Eugenia looked up quickly. Kennedy's eyes met hers—large, lustrous, liquid, even more compelling, I thought, than they had seemed at the laboratory. But there seemed to be an unaccountable hostility in her manner, now. There was a most amazing change from the girl who had almost begged for help. What was it, I wondered?

I studied her delicately moulded face, sensitive, not sensuous. Yet now she seemed inspired by an abandon as she worked on the odd setting, an abandon which I could not help feeling was utterly foreign to her true nature. Was this the "other" Eugenia, her artificial self? . . .

I did not neglect to appraise Earl Hunter—tall, spare, with thin sandy hair, small, close-cropped mustache, in every action an artistic affectation which gave me the impression of covering up a latent moral obliquity.

Hunter regarded Kennedy sourly as he drifted from praising the set as expressing the avatar dream life of the dancers to the more intimate subject of dreams themselves.

"The more I study dreams," remarked Kennedy keenly, "the more fascinated I am at getting at the real self underneath the artificial self."

I saw Eugenia shoot a covert glance at Kennedy. As for Hunter he was all sullen suspicion. His type and Kennedy's mixed like a cobra and a mongoose. Was Kennedy psychoanalyzing Eugenia herself, laying a foundation for a conflict, a war of wills?

Hunter, with his artistic ease, appealed to Eugenia, quite evidently to break up the tête-à-tête. Nor did Kennedy offer any resistance.

The moment Eugenia crossed to the other side of the set, Kennedy quietly nudged me between himself and them. It was not till then that I noticed a wicker table on which, among other things, was a handbag that must have belonged to her.

Quickly, Kennedy picked it up, snapped it noiselessly open. Out of the tail of my eye I made out that among other things there seemed to be a package of cigarettes in a gold monogrammed case. He removed a couple, then closed the bag, laid it down, and took a few paces forward.

"What do you think?" I asked under my breath.

He shook his head. "Think?" he muttered, edging toward the door. "I think if I can get Violet Vane in conflict with her, we would learn something!"

By the time we arrived at the Eleventh Street house, he had invented not only a plausible but an attractive excuse. We were agents of a producer who was contemplating a play, 'The Hidden Self' for Broadway.

Not only was Violet there, in the big living-room downstairs, but Leonie and Radcliffe as well, apparently engaged in some conference of which Violet was the center.

Ormsby's description had been accurate. Leonie was the typical artistic dilettante, with a shock of curly bobbed hair, soulful eyes, long-throated neck, and a stock of all the isms and spasms that convulse the volcanic intellectual belt bordering her home. Radcliffe had the assurance of one who believed that everything bearing those mystic syllables "psycho" was his as if by trademark registered at the United States patent office.

In this fringe of culture, little Violet seemed ruled by the latest overwhelming emotion, in a state of constant mental ebullition. And, by the same token, at the mere mention of the mythical "Hidden Self," Violet spilled the beans.

"Why, you know, the Psychoanalysis

Society down here gave a play last winter, an original sketch, 'Dreams.' It was weird, wonderful, exotic. Why, we had a character we called 'The Sinister Shadow.' He exerted a sort of malicious mesmerism over the other characters, just as I imagine you have a character in your play (although Kennedy had said absolutely nothing about anything of the kind) and seemed to drive them mentally in any direction he pleased. The climax comes when he exercises what we called 'The Death Thought.' And just fancy! Our pioneering is waking up Broadway!"

As we excused ourselves, having learned even more than we bargained for, I could not help exclaiming on the street, "Thinker fakers!"

Kennedy, usually dispassionate, was more tolerant. "Really, Walter, I feel sorry for that little girl. Radcliffe may be a sophist and Leonie may be blinded by the glitter. I'm thinking of Violet, and Hunter, and the fascination he excites in a certain type of woman who thinks she thinks. Hunter believes woman may be a creature of diaphanous draperies and man the eternal explorer of her charms. Maybe Violet's legitimate prey. But can we sit idly by and see Eugenia Vance drawn into it?" . . .

I spent the rest of the afternoon in a vain attempt to get more information from or about Zuki. Recalling what Ormsby had said, I felt nothing would be too desperate for Violet to attempt in order to hold Hunter.

I was rewarded by nothing better than my own thoughts. Somehow there stuck in my mind what Violet had told us about the play, about the "Sinister Shadow." I was obsessed by the idea of the "Death Thought." What did it mean to them? What potential hold had it? What might be this "Death Thought"—what modern mummery, twentieth century witchcraft, scientific obeah?

So I came at last to rejoin Kennedy at the laboratory that evening.

"I strongly suspect," he volunteered, "that Dunphy's case and mine are the same."

"You mean—Hunter may be the man higher up?"

Kennedy shrugged. "If the Romaine House out on the Island was the base, the stuff could be brought in in the Romaine car, even Eugenia's, by Zuki—or anyone. They'd need him for the motor boat, too."

"That would be lurid. Highbrow crooks of lowbrow vices!"

"Worse than that," remarked Craig gravely, and for the first time I noticed the genuinely sober cast of his face. "I believe," he said slowly, "that Artifex is back of it!"

"The Soul Slayer—again!" I gasped.

"REMEMBER," Kennedy went on, "Artifex has discovered how to create out of crude coal tar—by replacing hydrogen atoms with the other elements and groups—compounds that have never existed in nature—compounds that have merely existed in the imagination of man—selective elixirs of the mind cells—made-to-order derivatives to produce any mental result he desires! Artifex has created a new chemistry—the chemistry of the mind. He has created an Artificial Soul! And, recall. With his malignant molecules his blows are against the very foundations of our social order!"

"But—what makes you suspect the mind chemist?"

Craig did not answer directly. "It is most remarkable, this Freud theory. I wonder it never occurred to anyone before to take advantage of it—in this way. What a fertile field there is here in discovering and playing on suppressed emotions!"

As Craig thought aloud, I began to realize how devilish might be the work of one who, like Artifex, delved under the surface of society.

"Now that I come to think of it," I exclaimed, "you struck a complex in Eugenia—in the very theory itself."

Craig smiled, as he broke one of the

cigarettes which he had taken from the case in Eugenia's handbag.

"Try it," he offered, handing one half to me, at the same time lighting the other. I did the same.

"This smoke tastes differently from any tobacco I've ever smoked," I remarked doubtfully. "It's not unpleasant—just peculiar."

I soon felt the effect, however, although I cannot begin adequately to describe it. A subtle warmth seemed to penetrate my body. I had a sense of elevation. What a whole one, or more, of the cigarettes might have done I cannot say. There was a sensuous feeling of drifting along that overcame me as I relaxed on the cushioned chair.

I closed my eyes. It seemed to me that I was in the midst of an exquisite dream. I seemed carried along in a current of well-being. A beautiful face appeared. It was neither Eugenia's nor Leonie's—yet it was a composite of each, of features in each that I admired. At least I knew that she was sensuous—whichever she might be. . . .

SUDDENLY, as though another stream of consciousness merged in the pleasant river down which I floated, I recalled where we were and why.

For a moment I felt a most intense horror and fear of the monster, Artifex. I seemed to see a shadowy figure . . . gradually it took form. . . . I felt my flesh creep. . . . It was Oriental . . . Zuki? . . . No . . . it seemed that the face was shifting as if the phantasmagoria was picturizing my own thoughts. Slowly the indistinct features became more blended and then distinct . . . and it was Radcliffe I saw . . . as plainly as if he had been standing in the opposite corner by Kennedy's laboratory table!

I leaped up with a start—eyes widened.

"What is it—that stuff?" I gasped.

"Some hypnotic—not in the sense of sleep-producing, but rather will-destroying."

"But the name—are you familiar with the thing?"

"Yes—hashish!" he answered simply. "That is, at least it is a hashish composition. You know, there are five common narcotics used the world over—tobacco, opium, coca, the betel nut, and Indian hemp or hashish. Hashish may be smoked in the *narghile*, chewed, taken in a drink with alcohol, or eaten as a confection.

"It makes the nerves walk and dance and run, heightens feelings and sensibilities to distraction, produces what is really hysteria. If the day is bright, it means unbounded joy to the *hashishen*. If it is dark, then gloom almost to suicide. Fear becomes abject terror. Liking translates itself into passionate love.

"The real, natural stuff goes by a dozen names, in the Orient—*cannabis indica*, or bhang. It is what makes the coolie run amuck. It will make the highest type of mind run amuck. You experienced the dreams yourself, on just a bit of the stuff. But, remember, this is probably synthetic—and can be used in any way the maker wants."

I began to gather the significance of it. Perhaps, impatient over results of psychoanalysis, Artifex had used this physical, physiological aid in weakening the resistance of his victims. Again flashed over me the thought of the "Sinister Shadow" in the play. I saw how fear, once created, could be intensified into a "death thought."

In Artifex, now, I saw the incarnation of his god, Lucifer. For the thousandth time, it came to me that this was a deeper case than Kennedy had ever faced before. In it all I saw the inevitable conflict between spirituality and materialism, that thing which, for want of a better name, is often called the conflict between science and religion.

"Science amuck," remarked Kennedy as I haltingly expressed my feelings, "is far worse for the world than religion amuck. Religion is striving, however blindly and unmistakably, upward. Science of this sort is plunging down—ruthlessly. Artifex, whoever he is, is the spirit of frightfulness . . . science without soul!" he exclaimed.

IV

It was late when we arrived at the Studio Masque at the Helicon. As a costume dance it was exotic, erotic. We were accepted as strangers who had been attracted either out of curiosity or interest in the "new art." I looked about keenly for Ormsby, but he was not in sight; at least I could not recognize him.

From the snatches of gay laughter and repartee, we gathered quickly that the climax which was building was the Dream Dance—a reincarnation of the bacchanal in the grove on the Aventine Hill when the women first admitted men to these rites of revelry hitherto monopolized by them.

Led by Eugenia, a superb figure of woman, in flowing Roman robe of shimmering white, there developed what might be best described as a riotous dance-poem in which each dancer expressed not some set series of steps, but rather interpreted in rhythm of movement the feelings that the bacchanalian music inspired in her personality.

Among the bacchantes I recognized Leonie, but I sought in vain for Violet. Earl Hunter, as Bacchus, made a classic figure, while before him, Radcliffe, his chief votary, presided over an altar covered with chalices of Bacchic ambrosia.

Momentarily the wild and mystic festival of Dionysus seemed duplicated—that is, to a degree. As all crowded forward I felt that what in the others was gross was in Eugenia, at least, graceful.

As they passed, the chief votary of the god of revelry was handing chalices to the bacchantes and the other votaries. The music and the rhythmic dance were working toward a climax. Each, with a chalice, poised, awaited the signal of the god.

Slowly Hunter, holding his cup in one hand, waved the other, rhythmically to signal the drinking orgy.

There was a hysterical scream of a woman—and a spectator strode forward, shouldering the dancers roughly out of his way. In an instant he had dashed the chalice from Eugenia's hand. It fell in a hundred bits on the floor.

Instantly the dance hall was in an uproar. Above the voices boomed the voice of Ormsby.

"Eugenia's chalice is drugged—with a sleeping draught!"

Silence succeeded.

"That other—of Bacchus—is poisoned!"

I shot a glance at Kennedy. Beside him was little Violet Vane, hysterically clutching him.

"I tell you, sir—" she chattered, "—I know! It's my dream—no, my intuition—I—I know! The professor needs Eugenia's money—her prestige! Outside—Zuki—the motor running—in here—the sleeping potion—a cave-man capture—off in the car—drugged—she will marry—or be compromised—they will have her fortune! He is using Earl—oh, save Earl from it—if you can!"

"Walter—keep her quiet—a moment," commanded Kennedy.

The next instant he was in the center of the astounded dancers. He picked up the chalice before Hunter, sniffed it, and his face clouded in perplexity. Was it poisoned? Holding it an instant, he raised it to his lips and tasted an infinitesimal drop.

"No—no—no—don't!" shrieked Eugenia, panic-stricken by the sudden tenseness.

Kennedy set the chalice down quickly, and picked up that which Radcliffe had set before him. Again he sniffed, made as though he would taste it, then set it down, dipped his finger in it, and quickly smeared it on Radcliffe's eye. Then he turned his face and peered into the eye.

"Dilating—just a trifle—deadly nightshade—*atropa belladonna*!"

A gasp swept over the crowd. The poisoned cup had actually been in the hands of Radcliffe. What did it mean?

I turned as Ormsby shouldered his way again through the panic-stricken revellers. Was it merely that I imagined, in the shadows of the lobby, that I saw a figure turn and slink away?

An instant and pandemonium broke loose among the masquers. I swung

about to catch the arm of the hysterical Violet, but I was too late. She had sifted into the surging crowd. That moment of diversion had been enough. Neither Hunter nor Radcliffe were where I had seen them last. All I could see was Eugenia, appealing to Kennedy, as the one strong figure in the welter of unmasking.

Kennedy whispered a few earnest sentences to her. She wheeled, facing Leonie, and above the clamor I caught the words: "—and, Leonie,—back of it all—was Radcliffe!"

A surge of the milling crowd swept me away as I saw Eugenia grip herself, as it were.

The next few minutes were but a succession of panic-stricken faces until at last I found myself by chance at the side of Violet Vane. She was standing, dazed, in the lobby, reading a crumpled paper in her hand. I bent over and read:

"The mental mastery must end before it gives me the Death Thought.

"EUGENIA."

"The car is still there, with the motor running. Where's Zuki?"

I was Ormsby, frantically dashing back from the street. Through the thinning crowd now pushed Kennedy.

"Where is she?" demanded Ormsby. "I thought she might be with you."

"No—what's that, Violet,—where did you get that?"

"Somebody crushed it into my hand—in the crowd."

We gazed at each other blankly. All had melted away except Violet and Leonie, who walked as though in a trance.

Who had prepared and marked the different chalices? As nearly as we could make out from the confused replies of Leonie and Violet, that work had been done by Hunter and Radcliffe themselves, assisted by Zuki, before the dance. There was no clue there.

All trace had been lost of Eugenia; it was certain she could not have fled in her deserted car. Nor could we gather anything of the whereabouts of Hunter,

Radcliffe or Zuki. It was as though all had dropped out of existence. Or had the plot, hastily modified, been carried out in another way?

Quickly Kennedy decided to leave it to O'Connor and Dunphy to locate the missing masquers.

Ormsby remonstrated, but Craig insisted. "This is a case of locating missing persons. In that, no one without an organization can be half as efficient as the police with organization—provided the police want to do so badly enough. Just trust me, Ormsby."

THERE was nothing for Ormsby to do but curb his impatience both during those early morning hours and, in fact, most of the next day.

I thought, myself, Kennedy's nonchalance in the matter strange, but decided that he had other leads he intended working, and it was not until the evening that I met Craig at the laboratory.

"Dunphy's on the trail of Radcliffe. In his own vernacular, he expects to 'crash' him tonight."

"Where's Ormsby?"

"Ormsby's on a mission for me."

The buzzer sounded at the door. "I'm expecting Leonie," motioned Craig.

"No trace of Eugenia?" she inquired anxiously as I admitted her.

Kennedy's implied negative did not tend to reassure her. "Do you think she could have—?" Her voice died off in uncertainty. Leonie seemed rudderless, drifting, without the guidance of the mind master.

Quite apparently she was concealing the conflict of Violet's accusation of Radcliffe's plot against Eugenia by clinging to the fact that the poisoned chalice had been in Radcliffe's hands. And indeed it was perplexing.

"I sent for you, Miss Romaine," shot out Kennedy in quick staccato, "because there is something that you haven't told—yet! Where is the headquarters of this Psychoanalysis Society?"

"Oh—down in the Village—I'll take you there—some time!"

It was no mere fancy that there was a nameless terror in her tone. She did

not even pause to see whether Kennedy was in reality diverted from his question.

"Not long ago," she hastened, "we gave a play which we called 'Dreams.' It dealt with the uncovering of suppressed desires. You are familiar with the Freud theory, I imagine?"

"Tolerably," nodded Kennedy. "I think I was a pioneer in using it in criminology."

I wondered why he had put the answer so pointedly. But then I figured that there must be a reason. No one would ever have accused Leonie of suffering from an "inferiority complex." Perhaps it was in the nature of a dare.

"And that chauffeur, Zuki. Where did Eugenia get Zuki? Did he come well recommended?"

"Why . . . yes . . . he was a young Japanese . . . working his way through at the University. His doctor's thesis was, I believe, 'The Psychoanalysis of the Occult.' . . . He—er—was often at the Psychoanalysis Society . . . we tried to make it democratic and cosmopolitan. . . . We even built a part into the play for him. . . ."

"About this Society—" reverted Craig.

"We gave the play at the Village Theatre."

"All right, then. Tell me about it. When you were constructing the play; studying your parts and rehearsing—did anyone try psychoanalysis?"

"Why, yes . . . of course . . . practical work . . . what of it? Of course we studied the Freud theory . . . who does not, nowadays?"

Her defiance was now low and tremulous, in a frightened tone:

"Did Eugenia ever tell any of her dreams?" asked Kennedy directly.

"Yes . . . we all exchanged dream data."

"Do you remember any of them?"

Was she Freudian enough to know the betrayal of a hesitation? She had an exceptionally acute mind. But she was not quick thinker enough.

"Yes . . . Eugenia often dreamed of animals . . . of dogs, once of a serpent

. . . and once of a mad bull. They frightened her . . . but fascinated, too. . . . Many of her dreams, though, were about people . . . the poor. She was always interested in social work, you know, or reform. . . . But it was the fear dreams that interested us."

"I take it, then," he queried, turning full toward her, "that you are a student of the Freud theory?"

"Y-yes," she hesitated, on guard.

"You know, then, that the theory teaches that dreams give us the most reliable and intimate information concerning the individual. You know that dreams are all personal. You know that they often represent the realization of an unconsciously repressed wish."

He stopped an instant, but not long enough to give her a chance to reply. "I shall not attempt to interpret for you any dreams which either you or she may have had—the interpretation of the fears and morbid anxieties they probably showed. I do not know what . . . anyone . . . told you. Perhaps he told you only a part. But your answers to me show one thing—among many others. To me, they—you—show that, though you endeavor to conceal it, there is indeed a sinister shadow lurking in the depths of your own life!"

He watched the effect of the words "sinister shadow" on her. Her face was not able to conceal a certain shock. Evidently Kennedy had struck the truth.

"The fact is," raced on Craig, before she could resist, "somebody discovered the weaknesses, known and unknown, of you all. Then, it looks as if someone—by playing on those weaknesses—exerted a strange power!"

She could not meet his eyes. . . .

"Where is this place in Greenwich Village?" Craig shot out suddenly.

"But . . ." stammered Leonie, obsessed with fear, "there is no one there . . . now. . . . In the afternoon . . . perhaps. . . ."

The telephone interrupted. Kennedy answered, then turned to us. He fixed his eyes on Leonie.

"A message from Dunphy. The Romaine house—your house—on Lloyd's

Neck—has been blown up and set on fire."

The girl started. Craig leaned forward: "There was nobody staying there— isn't that so?" he cried.

Leonie nodded—staring, crushed. "No one," she breathed. . . .

Quickly my mind pieced the story together. The mystery house had been blown up to destroy evidence of the drug smuggling at the moment Dunphy was about to make a raid. Could it be that the staring, crushed girl before us was, with all her pretensions of modernism, merely an ignorant tool?

"Now . . . Miss Romaine," demanded Kennedy firmly, "the time has come to do what you have so far avoided. You must take us to that Psychoanalysis Society . . . quick!"

There was a dominance in Kennedy's tone and manner before which the last shreds of her resistance crumpled.

"Yes," she stammered, high-strung, almost on the verge of collapse, "I'll go . . . I'll go. . . . It is in Minetta Lane . . . in Greenwich Village!"

Kennedy paused in the laboratory just long enough to hold a hasty telephone conversation with our old friend, O'Connor, now the third deputy and in charge of the detective bureau. We could not hear what he said in the booth.

Startled and excited, Leonie looked fearsomely about the laboratory at the strange scientific apparatus which Kennedy had collected in years of warfare of science against crime.

Craig took a small package from a closet where I knew he kept some of his newest and choicest apparatus, and we were off.

V

EVEN as Kennedy went into swift action I felt a half-formed fear. Could anyone be trusted? The thought flashed over me: Was Artifex playing now against us? Might Leonie prove to be really his *alter ego*? Had it all been a plant set out by Artifex to lure us on?

Kennedy was determined—even

though the quest took us to the gates of Hell. And where Kennedy went I went.

Would it lead us to the headquarters, the workshop, the den of Hunter, of Radcliffe, of Zuki, or some master mind behind them? There, at least, Kennedy felt, would be some clue to the personality of Artifex.

Still Leonie's lips were sealed as if by some strange compulsion. A fearful conflict seemed to be raging within her. Or was it that she did not know, merely feared? . . .

Minetta Lane was one of those narrow, tortuous streets in that part of old New York south and west of Washington Square where crime and culture, poverty and aristocracy rub elbows.

The site of the Psychoanalysis Society was, to say the least, picturesque. It was reached through an alley after perhaps five minutes' walk into the heart of Greenwich Village.

Tremblingly, Leonie admitted us.

Here we were at last—in the secret haunt of Artifex!

It was half laboratory, half den and study—a strange combination of science and mysticism—Orientalism of Egypt, of the Near East, of India, of the Far East—Occidental scientific equipment that had a strong savor of the Continent.

Kennedy plunged at once into the examination of the curious scientific paraphernalia—seeking to unlock the secrets of Artifex—the psychological chemist—and his science of the soul.

"The devil—himself!"

Craig was examining a pile of blueprints that lay on a flat desk.

I looked over his shoulder and found that he was intently studying a diagram, his first clue to what he was here de-standard with a glass bulb with four apertures. The rest of it, however, I did not understand.

But the lettering was plain enough to me—in sweeping capitals, white on blue—**THE DESTROYER.**

"What do you think it is?" I asked.

"A wireless incendiary," replied Craig in, for him, a startled tone. "A

drawing of what may be called an igniting resonator!"

Vaguely I understood, but it was rather from the startled look on his face than from his words that I got the significance of the discovery.

"You know," quickened Kennedy, "in certain cases, radio telegrams have provoked fires from a distance. Probably these misdeeds of wireless gave Artifex his first clue to what he has here described. Why, Walter, so simple a thing as a broken metal strap about a cotton bale may be effective as even this elaborate apparatus. This fellow has studied the wide but obscure possibilities of combustion under the most ordinary conditions of household and industrial life . . ."

"But," I gasped, still with my eye full of the word on it, "but—Craig . . . 'The Destroyer.' What does it mean?"

"Mean? I could tell you better if I knew more of this Artifex—and his ideals. Were he a Bolshevik, I would say that his idea was to place one of these igniting resonators in every factory. . . . Sabotage could go no further! Were he an imperialist, I could say that with deadly germ bombs equipped with this device, he might plan to engulf a whole nation with one sweep of wireless impulses in a pestilence that would wipe it out, and render powerless an army of physicians ten times greater than all our medical schools could turn out in a decade!

"I suspect . . . I suspect that this Artifex has some international record, some secret-agent scheme of world terror. Perhaps, in an age when we talk of disarmament—and know that wars of the future must be waged with chemicals, with poisons, with gases, with fatal disease germs—perhaps his Destroyer is a simple instrument and cheap, a marvelous war engine designed to give world supremacy in that war which will follow mythical disarmament!"

My head was spinning with the immensity of the idea.

"Conditions after the World War, Walter, have bred an entirely new spe-

cies of criminal," he went on, "the enemy of society itself. The criminal of the past felt himself a criminal—hunted. Today . . . he hunts!

"And here, the Destroyer—the wireless incendiary—the igniting resonator—this elaborate little apparatus by which combustion—and hence explosion—can be started at a distance by an electric wave—this is in the hands of an enemy of society—an enemy of America!"

Leonie tiptoed over beside us.

"The fact is," added Kennedy, awed himself as he considered the possibilities, "there is no probing the depths of a mind at once capable of conceiving the corruption of what should be the highest level of our society, to undermine it, for whatever may be his racial, or imperial, or social purpose . . . and at the same time conceiving a war-engine, like this Destroyer, as violent physically as his corruption is insidious socially!"

Slowly he swept his eyes over the room. "And," he added, "without a doubt—one of these resonators—is hidden here—for protection in case of a raid—just such as we are making!"

It was an idea that seemed never to have entered Leonie's mind.

"Mr. Jameson!" she shrilled. "The door!"

I sprang to it. It had automatically locked!

Frantically I beat it. It was steel, grained to resemble wood!

The walls were concrete! Windows there were none—and already I could sense that the system of automatic ventilation was failing!

"No air! How long can we breathe?"

Just then the telephone tinkled, almost as if by induction. Kennedy answered it. Over it came a mocking laugh.

"*You shall live . . . just long enough for me to get to my secret central station from which I fired the 'Old Ship' and Romaine House!*" . . .

As Kennedy repeated the mocking message, Leonie seemed transformed. Her face was like a study of cyclone

sky. I saw the struggle within herself. Though she did not know Artifex—she feared him as medieval man feared Satan. And the desertion of everyone about her yesterday was tearing her heart in a conflict of fear and faithfulness.

"Someone . . . Radcliffe . . . had learned his power!" she vibrated intuitively. "So . . . he must use one of his creatures to remove him . . . then remove that creature. . . . Now . . . I . . . you are his instruments!"

Kennedy glanced sidewise at me. This was no time for philosophizing. He was over by the lone electric light socket. Frantically I jiggled the telephone receiver hook. Somehow the telephone wire had been disconnected or cut. I looked about in despair and was about to exclaim.

"Thank heaven," remarked Kennedy calmly, "they've left us the lighting circuit!"

With that—the light flashed out!

Leonie screamed, but, closer to him, I could feel that he was unscrewing the lamp from its socket and connecting something in its place.

Above the hysterical breathing now of Leonie I heard Kennedy.

"O'Connor! O'Connor! Are you there?"

Was Craig crazy—talking to thin air in this huge tomb—with that deadly Destroyer hidden somewhere—at any moment about to blow us to eternity?

"We're prisoners . . . in that Society room I told you about. . . . Bring that apparatus. . . . Yes. . . . Hurry! . . . We may be blown to hell . . . any moment!"

"Wh-what is it?" chattered Leonie, who had groped her way through the darkness and was now clinging to the very Kennedy she feared.

"De Forest's new wireless telephone. Wherever there's an electric light circuit, you can attach this new radio-telephone . . . and talk. I took the precaution . . . weeks ago when I first experimented with it . . . to have a receiver placed in headquarters . . . by my friend O'Connor. Every electric

light socket is a potential transmitter!"

Its wonders seemed small help to me. I paced up and down, tripping on rugs, stumbling over furniture in my excitement—overturning a stand of test-tubes with a crash of glass. It was a race of death—O'Connor against Artifex! Was it a losing race? Would O'Connor come prepared? How battle against steel and concrete?

We were trapped!

Her hands pressed to her throbbing temples, Leonie crouched back, as Kennedy stripped the veneer off the social set that she had believed so modern . . . and demonstrated how they had been merely puppets in the hands of one who . . . by his drugs . . . his philosophy . . . drove people headlong in a riot of primal passions . . . to what?

"You did not know . . . but you know now . . . there is something back of it all in this case . . . some terrible personality that lurks behind all these events—one who calls himself Artifex!"

Leonie listened, wide-eyed, aghast.

"You mean," she whispered hoarsely, "that our thinking—our lives—were not our own—were his—were created and changed by—those drugs—that it was Hunter against Radcliffe—Eugenia against myself—pawns in his game—played against each other to save himself—as he is now playing you—against me—that he may go on in his frightful scheme?"

"I mean just that," emphasized Kennedy. "I mean that in one girl, Eugenia, among the most talented I have ever met, he was changing a wholesome personality into a dual personality—an artificial self—fashioning what was to be one of his worst and most potent weapons!"

Leonie's voice rose shrilly as, sweeping in on her, came a realization of the fact that what she had stamped "sterling" was a base counterfeit.

"But who—which is Artifex?" I broke in insistently. "You must know!"

She laughed in hollow hysteria. It was as though Leonie herself was but a part of some maleficent influence

which even now she could not throw off.

I heard a hissing at the door. An instant later a sharp piercing flame shot out! There was a shower of sparks in the darkness, like a pyrotechnic display.

"My God!" screamed Leonie, "The Destroyer!"

Kennedy was unruffled.

Along the outline of the door the shower of sparks traced and, with a rush of relief, I realized that Craig had provided O'Connor with an oxyacetylene blow torch—and that it was cutting the steel as if it were a knife!

Tense the seconds followed as the knife of flame traveled about the sheet-steel, bolt-studded door.

At last it fell in. A shadowy figure leaped through and gripped Kennedy.

"Great work—O'Connor!" triumphed Craig.

The deputy flashed about his pocket electric bull's-eye—then, with the second nature of a detective to make a search, started over toward the laboratory table.

"No—Chief—no! Beat it!—Beat it!" shouted Kennedy, seizing him.

Outside we found a tense group.

"Here he is," growled Dunphy, "Radke—Radcliffe!"

Leonie screamed.

But in my astoundment I had eyes for only a group of three back of the detectives. Ormsby had his arm about, supporting, Eugenia, who clung to him. Beside her stood a tall, distinguished-looking man, who I knew must be her father, Junius Vance, the banker. . . .

As Kennedy with outstretched arms forced us all back rapidly, I caught in hasty fragments answers to my questions from the changed Eugenia.

In the shock after the Dream Dance, she had thrown herself on Kennedy's care. Instantly she had felt the war of wills between him and someone else. In the mêlée he had spirited her through a side entrance, into a cab, and not to her studio, but to her family house.

Leonie, close beside me, caught the last explanation.

"But . . . how about the note . . . the Death Thought?"

"I wrote it—myself," panted Kennedy, pressing us back. "She put herself in my care . . . I meant that she should have one day . . . at least . . . to throw off that artificial . . . drug."

As we struggled into the alley, I heard Leonie inquire about Violet from the unsympathetic Dunphy.

"She? . . . She has her Earl . . . I dropped him at Eleventh Street . . . where she can collect her radical alimony!"

Ormsby wedged himself between Eugenia and the danger behind us.

"And Chester," she murmured. "There'll be no card with a maiden name on a studio door. . . . I'm Mrs. Ormsby!"

It was like a motion picture cut in three-foot flashes. In the hurly-burly I found myself beside Radcliffe, with Dunphy and O'Connor ahead and only Kennedy just at our heels.

All the intellectual swank of Radcliffe was lost in the captured Radke.

"That poisoned chalice—and now the police!" he muttered to himself.

Instantly I got it. He was between the devil, Artifex, and the deep sea, the law.

We were just emerging toward the street lights at the end of the alley in Minetta Lane when Radcliffe unexpectedly turned, reached out in desperation, seized Kennedy, shoved him aside.

"Craig! No!"

I braced myself, flinging myself before Kennedy as he turned after him. Radcliffe disappeared into the blackness.

"He's got it—the Death Thought—too!" Kennedy panted as O'Connor came abreast, flanking him on the other side and holding him back. . . .

There was a terrific detonation . . . flinging us all three in a promiscuous heap.

Radcliffe had retraced his steps down the alley just far enough to be caught in the explosion in which the secrets of the den of Artifex were blown to atoms.



Glamor

By Eleanor De Lamater

THE moon
Is quite impartial.
I remember how I watched her faithless light
Reflected in the crystal of a dream
I had.
Now that the fragile shape
Of that impossibility
Lies shattered and in fragments at my feet,
I know
That I could bear to stoop and look at it
If in her light
The pieces did not glitter so.



What was the Professor up to? . . .

Brunettes **PREFERRED**

By Sterling Beeson

"**D**EAR, I wish that you discontinue your practice of coming into my room and turning on a bright light, when you return from the observatory."

The professor's charming little wife expressed this desire for privacy with such a timid petulance, and such a shy, childish naiveté, that grim old Boggs, the professor of astronomy in the local university, couldn't resist the impulse to get up, walk around the breakfast table, and put his clumsy paws upon the crisp folds of her morning robe.

She discouraged this awkward attempt at tenderness by an almost imperceptible shrinking, and a sudden reaching for the coffee pot. Boggs returned to his place opposite.

"Why, my dear, I just want to see that you are all right—not, of course, that there is any serious occasion for my going into your room, but I just want a peek at you before I go to bed."

"Well, you invariably wake me up, and sometimes I can't get back to sleep for hours," she said. "I'll tell you what we'll do. I'll leave a dim light burning in my dressing room, and the door open into my chamber. You just take a little good-night peek and switch off the light when you come home."

"I'll be as silent as the twilight," said the professor as he rose. And with a few worried speculations as to his day's duties, he started to his classes.

LITTLE Mrs. Boggs sipped her coffee reflectively as she listened to his footsteps in the hall. She heard the front door close behind him.

"Marie," she called. A trim-looking, black-haired maid came silently into the

room, and stood respectfully at the proper distance from her mistress.

Mrs. Boggs looked at her intently for an instant.

"How far can I trust you?" she asked abruptly.

"Oh, Mrs. Boggs. I don't know what you mean," said the girl. Her breath came a little faster. A queer, frightened look came into her eyes.

"I've got enough on you to send you to prison, Marie," said Mrs. Boggs softly. "You stole my bracelet. That's grand larceny. You took some things from Mrs. Wilson, too."

The girl commenced to stammer a protest.

"Oh, don't bother to deny it," said Mrs. Boggs. "You're guilty, and you know it. It isn't to make trouble that I mention these unpleasant things. I want to make a deal with you."

"Oh, Mrs. Boggs!" said the girl with differential astonishment.

"Well," said Mrs. Boggs, "here are the conditions. My husband has a habit of prowling into my room when he returns from the observatory at night. I have persuaded him just to look in from now on, and then switch off the light. I am quite sure that on some evenings even that will annoy me."

She appraised the girl before her. "Your hair is just about as dark as mine," she continued. "Every few nights I want you to get into my bed, and he will look at you and think he sees me. Of course, you will be covered up to your eyes, and you'll be sound asleep. I am depending upon you. If you should fail to accomplish the deception, you will have to tell the police how

a truck driver you know came to sell my bracelet to a pawnbroker."

* * *

PROFESSOR BOGGS was a very enthusiastic astronomer. He was often at the observatory until very late, and when he came home, he would peek into the darkened chamber. . . . One night he made a discovery in an obscure corner of the heavens. Nothing less than a new star twinkled at him through the long telescope. He hurried home exultant. Surely such an event justified him. They would sit up together as of old in honeymoon days, and from the dark of their chamber look through the window at the stars. And he would tell her of his find.

He tiptoed across the room and bent over the sleeper. . . .

"I THINK I'll get rid of that Marie," pouted Mrs. Boggs one morning as she was pouring the coffee.

The austere Professor Boggs looked up suddenly from his poached egg.

"She's putting on so many airs it's almost impossible to live with her," continued Mrs. Boggs. "And she is certainly leading an immoral life of some kind. She has more clothes than I do, and she babbles about getting a car."

"She's a faithful, devoted little thing," mumbled the professor. "We've had her so long that she seems almost like one of the family. Really, dear, think it over. Good servants are not easy to get, you know, and you and I are very exacting. Because the girl is thrifty is no reason why you should condemn her."

"No, but she's lazy and insolent," replied Mrs. Boggs with some asperity. "She's been here too long. All these servants get ideas if they live long enough in anybody's house. Actually, she treats me as though I were a boarder!"

"Do as you like, dear," said the professor. "You're running the house. I seldom come in contact with the servant, anyway. Did you have anyone in mind to take her place?"

"Oh, there are several whom I can get," said Mrs. Boggs. "One must look up their references so carefully that I haven't fully decided. I want a brunette. I think that dark-haired girls look better than blondes in cap and apron, don't you?"

"Yes," said Professor Boggs, as he rose to go to his classes, "by all means get a brunette."

There was the slightest twinkle in his eye.



MEN win women by flattery, by appeal to their vanity, by cajolery; just as they hold women by indifference, by callousness, by cruelty.



A WOMAN is never at ease until she is absolutely sure of the man. Then he usually wearies her.



A MAN'S dealings with a woman are usually of three stages: desire, doubt and disillusion.

At Deauville in the height of the fashionable season
An American Girl—An English Lord

PEOPLE whispered evil things about Sir John. He was notorious—a rake—a drunkard—they gossiped about the women he knew.

But the American girl didn't believe it. . . . What she found out makes a dramatic episode.

The Mask of Satan

By Gladys Lee Malvern

THE foyer of the hotel at Deauville was crowded as usual one afternoon in late July. Two well-groomed women loitered beside Iris Gardner, gossiping about the new arrivals.

"Isn't that Sir John Edmonds? Yes, it is! Fancy him coming here!"

"Which is he? I've heard so much about him!"

"My dear, who hasn't!" responded her companion, with a scandalized but fascinated air.

"But why shouldn't he come here?"

"Oh, haven't you heard? The Baron and Baroness de Lornay are here! And the names of the Baroness and Sir John—well, everybody was talking about them in London this spring. It's well known what their relations were—" The two women moved on. . . .

Iris looked at the man who had created such interested discussion. Yes, he surely looked a person of importance. She was certain that she would like him if she ever had the chance. His face was strong and kindly and his mouth humorous, a likeable mouth. She imagined when he smiled—she approved of the way he glanced casually over the heads of the crowd and the way he nodded slightly in return to the many eager greetings about him. She wished

—he was just the sort of man—it was a pity she did not, could not know him!

His grey eyes passed over her and then returned to her. Suddenly he smiled broadly, a singularly boyish, friendly smile. Just the sort of smile she had imagined—Heavens! Was he smiling at *her*? No, she was mistaken, of course, it must be someone behind her! She turned her head nervously. When she looked at him again, he was actually coming toward her! She felt a sudden, childish desire to run! She was conscious of absurd little shivers chasing themselves up and down her spine, she was painfully aware of being the cynosure of all eyes. . . .

"How jolly to find you looking so well!"

She decided that his well-bred voice lived up to his smile. His hand was outstretched, there was nothing to do but put her own into it! She could not let him appear ridiculous before all these people! She must say something—anything! What should one say in a case like this?

"It—it's good to see you, Sir John," she answered, faintly.

"I say, how about tea, eh?"

She nodded. He led her through the crowd. Iris felt, for the first time since her arrival, pleasantly conspicu-

ous. Across the narrow table he regarded her in astonishment.

"Fancy *me*—doing that! Upon my word! Sporting of you not to give me away. I'd have looked rather an ass if you had, wouldn't I?"

She laughed infectiously. She felt very much at her ease now, as if she had known him a long time. "Why *did* you speak to me?" she asked.

"I saw you standing there alone, you—you were looking at me rather like my dog does, sometimes, when he wants me to pat him on the head!"

Her smile faded. "Well!" was all she could think of to say.

"Oh, I mean no discourtesy, upon my word I don't! He's the only thing in the world that I love—my dog! He's a thoroughbred—a blue ribbon winner! Please forgive me if I've offended you! I shall only be here a few days—mayn't we be friends?"

"Oh, then you didn't come for the season?"

"I came because my honor is at stake! I understand the Baron de Lornay has boasted that I am afraid to face him!"

Suddenly Iris remembered the conversation of the two women in which the name of Sir John Edmonds was connected with that of the Baroness. How could so coarse a creature as that woman appeal to a man of this type?

"You don't look the sort of a man who'd have vulgar affairs with married women," she said, thoughtfully.

His face reddened. "I—I assure you—"

"Don't bother. Only I'm sorry. I sort of liked you when I first saw you. I said to myself—well, no matter." She rose.

"Please, wait, I—"

"Goodbye," she said simply and walked away.

ONCE alone in her suite, she flung herself face downward upon the chaise-longue and sobbed. He didn't look like that sort of a man—he didn't! But, after all, what did it matter to her whether he was or not?

Her maid entered.

"Oh, m'selle is weep! All ladies weep over heem! *Ma foi!* I did not know m'selle was *la bonne amie* of Milor' Edmonds! Oh, m'selle, you are so young, so—so unspoiled! Beware zat man!"

"What do you know of him?" Iris demanded, sharply.

"Only what ze whole world knows, m'selle! He ees what you call 'no good'! He gamble—he drink—drink like ze beast! *Mon Dieu*, he ees terrible! In Monte Carlo and in London he have ze liaison with Madame La Baronne de Lornay! *On dit*, he run away when her 'usband 'ear of eet! He is—*entre nous*—he ees notorious! Once, in Biarritz, I see heem keeck ze leetle dog! When a man is keeck ze leetle dog, he is *un diable!* *N'est ce pas?*"

"Why, he told me he loved dogs! You must be mistaken, Suzette! That man could not be cruel to animals!"

"But—I *see* heem, M'mselle! . . ."

It was strange—very strange. Instinctively, in spite of all she had heard, Iris Gardner trusted him, believed him kind and honorable. She had her supper brought up and retired early.

II

SHE awakened suddenly as if a hand had stretched forth and gently touched her. After tossing fitfully for lengthy, midnight hours, she rose and walked to the open window. Overhead were darkly brooding skies, leaden, starless. Only she seemed alive in an ominous world—a slender, girlish figure with bare, white feet as perfect as those of some unshod Greek statue. Her gown, an expensive affair with an abundance of lace and ribbons, assumed the appearance of a flimsy, ethereal robe as it was caught and held suction-like by a vagrant, midsummer breeze, outlining every curve of her beautiful body. She seemed oddly like some mythical goddess—Psyche, awaiting Cupid, with wide open, child-wonder eyes. Instantly a lightning flash, like the ghost torch of foreboding, lit up the skies and left them, finding more of heaven, ap-

parently, by hovering about the untouched body, like a bright, licentious demon. Before a protective rumble of thunder it vanished, chastened, into the darkness and rain, suddenly released from long bondage, drenched the earth as if a mighty dam had broken. . . .

As the sun shone the next morning, Iris donned her audacious little bathing suit and went for a swim. The beach was deserted. As yet too early for the usual gay, colorful crowd, only a few nurse-maids were scattered here and there, their little charges digging industriously. She gave a sigh of mingled relief and disappointment that *he* was not in sight and swam out to the raft. The water and the sun blinded her as she reached it. Scrambling drippingly aboard, she heard a cheery, "Good morning, little American!"

"Oh!" she gasped, and blinked at him.

"I waited for you last evening," he said earnestly.

She regarded him, now that the clear air had dried the salt water from her long lashes, with utter disdain. Two little voices inside her were fighting like demons.

"He's lying!" said one fiercely. "He doesn't mean it! He looks at *all* women that way! He's a—he-vamp!"

"He does mean it!" rejoined the other, with even greater force. "He's *not* kidding you! Can't you tell a real man when you see one?"

Between them these conflicting emotions left her speechless.

"I wanted to send you a note," he went on quietly, "but I didn't know your name, you see!"

"I—I thought you'd go to the Casino last night!" she said, accusingly.

"Dumbell!" cried the tiny voice, "now you've let him know that you *thought* of him!"

"No," he replied, "I don't really care for that sort of thing."

She stared at him unbelievably. "Then, no doubt you—you got drunk?"

"Fool!" chided the annoying voice inside her. "What difference does it make to you, anyway? ~~A~~ A person'd

think you just got off the *Mayflower*! You sound like a regular conscientious objector!"

"A man who has learned how to drink," he answered quietly, "finds it unnecessary to ever get—beastly drunk. You've been hearing stories about me so soon?"

"I suppose you'll deny them?" Oh, she wanted him to deny them! She leaned toward him with eager eyes. "Please!" begged the eyes. "Please deny them for me!"

But he only shrugged. "No, I can't do that."

Her heart was so heavy it seemed to draw her away from him without the volition of her will.

"When a fellow is no end of a rotter," he continued, after a short pause, "when he's merely—the shadow of a man—the world makes it rather hard for him to be anything else! Yet, somehow, I wish—" He broke off abruptly, his broad shoulders sagged.

In spite of herself, she realized that she felt sorry for him, unaccountably sorry and strangely drawn to him.

"Did you—have you seen the Baron?"

"I called upon him at once."

"Yes?"

"He refused to fight!"

"Ah!" she sighed with distinct relief.

"After all, I've done my part. I came here to prove to—to my world that we Stormcliffs are not cowards! I can't fight a man who won't defend himself, so there's nothing for me to do but go home. I—I rather hate going without—without setting myself right in—in *your* eyes. 'Pon my word, I can't for the life of me figure out why it should matter so much what you think of me! I've only met you once and yet, I'd rather have your respect than—I say, take me on trust, won't you?"

She shrugged. "*Au contraire*," she laughed, trying to bring some semblance of indifference into her voice. "I can't do that!"

"You don't hate me—really, do you?"

"It would have been better for so many women if they could have—hated you, wouldn't it?" she answered steadily. "It's rather risky for a decent girl to be your friend, I think. Surely, you—you don't imagine that I could respect a man of your type? In New York, we'd call you—a 'cake-eater'! or—or a 'lounge lizard'!"

He winced. "Lounge lizard!" he echoed. "Very descriptive!"

"But not exactly—pretty, is it? I, too, am going home soon. . . ."

It brought a strong tinge of regret, just saying it. She felt that if she lingered there, within sound of his voice, within reach of his strong, browned arm, within the contagion of his smile, that inevitably she would have to put her head on his shoulder and tell him that what the world said of him did not matter.

She turned away quickly and dived. He followed at once. Side by side they swam to shore.

Once on the sand again, he spoke. "I have no right to your respect now, but some day, when it's honorable, when I'm jolly well sure it won't hurt someone else, I'm going to tell you—many things!"

"It isn't likely that we shall meet again, Sir John."

"We shall—some day. Until then—*au revoir*."

He was very grave as he said it. She felt an odd little catch in her throat. She reached out her hand tremulously to detain him, but he had already turned from her and was walking toward the pavilion.

III

IN the newest hotel at Deauville, there are numerous little nooks, partly hidden by foliage where lovers might engage in tête-à-têtes, safely screened from too prying eyes. In one of these that afternoon, Iris Gardner sat down to read. She forced herself to keep her eyes fastened to the page, but printed words were meaningless.

She was rudely disturbed by a rotund,

bald little man who smirked at her insultingly. She recognized him at once as Baron de Nornay. He had repeatedly ogled her, but heretofore he had discreetly kept a certain distance in doing so. The sight of him brought a keen antagonism. It was evident that he had followed her.

"Pardon," he said, with an oily, ingratiating smile, "if I intrude upon the privacy of Mademoiselle."

Iris looked through him as if he were not there and calmly returned to her book.

"One should *nevaire* have assumed the liberty of addressing Mademoiselle," he went on smoothly, "were it not that she appears to be *la chère amie* of Sir John Edward Edmonds! Ladies who openly flaunt their friendship with him—" the Baron raised his eyebrows suggestively, "cannot hope to have their privacy respected!"

"How dare you come to me and talk about him behind his back?" she flamed defiantly, "I'm proud of his friendship!"

"Indeed?"

"I'm proud of it, do you hear? What do I care what people say about him? It isn't true! I know the sort of a man he is—I know!"

The Baron seated himself close to her. "I apologize for my *faux pas*, Mademoiselle. He is indeed fortunate in having so spirited a champion. Ladies always defend him while he smiles upon them! Afterwards—*zut!* They speak in quite a different tone!"

Impulsively, Iris rose. She was furious. It gave her a keen sense of triumph to defend Sir John openly. She felt a little drunk with the joy of it. She wanted to assemble all these people, much as the ancient town crier had once called out a populace with a "Hear ye! Hear ye all!"

"It isn't true! He's not that kind of a man—he's not!"

"*Voilà!* She has a temper, this modest little Innocent!"

"I know him!"

"Who does not?"

"I believe in him!"

"Ah, there you are alone!"

"He's honorable and kind and good! I'm proud of his friendship and I don't care who knows it!"

"A European woman would not be so reckless!"

"I—"

She broke off suddenly. From behind her a shadow fell—the shadow of a man. Her heart missed a beat and then began pounding wildly against her temples. All recklessness had vanished, she felt suddenly weak and embarrassed.

"The Baron slunk away. . . ."

"I heard your defense of me," said the voice she had come to know so well.

She did not look at him. She kept snapping together the pages of her book. Although the day was warm, her fingers were icy fingers and she knew that she shivered a little.

"I didn't know women had faith like that any more—it's good to know it!" he went on, softly. "It makes a man feel jolly well glad to be alive after all, what?"

She did not answer.

"I wanted to find you," he was saying. "I told you this morning that some day, when I was quite sure it wouldn't hurt anyone else, I'd explain—many things. The time has come in—in a— a most unexpected, a most distressing way. I've just received a letter. It's from my brother. Will you read it, Little Champion?"

She grasped the letter and read the scrawled words slowly.

"Robert, Earl of Stormcliff—" She looked up at him inquiringly; there were tears in his eyes; she read on:

"Old Fellow,

"Awfully sorry to cut short your gallant little attempt to save the family honor by taking my name and going forth to fight my battles. Lucky for me we look so much alike that when we're apart people cannot tell the difference between us. It's saved me many a row and been rotten tough on you. You've been no end of a brick and I'm deucedly grateful for everything, but what I wanted to say was this—I'm alone in that old hunting lodge of mine, where you will find me safe from intrusion and all that sort of bosh.

"If I might cause you a bit more bother, Old Thing, I would suggest that you return at once and bury me. I've taken an overdose of that jolly old drug I've used for some time.

"It's rather curious, you know, because upon my word—I never thought I'd get up nerve enough to do it!

"So, you're free to remove the mask of Satan, Old Fellow, and—cheerio!

"JOHN EDWARD EDMONDS."

"The—it's from your brother," said Iris, after a short pause.

"Yes. My younger brother. There were only the two of us. I'm leaving on the next train. You will receive an invitation from my aunt to visit Stormcliff soon. Will you accept it?"

"Gladly."

"Then once again—*au revoir*. You won't forget me — for a few weeks?"

She lifted her eloquent, big eyes to him. "No," she replied softly, "I—I can't do that!"



THE man who blows out his brains because of a woman, makes two ridiculous assumptions: (1) that any woman who permits a man to blow out his brains because of her is worth it; (2) that he has some brains to blow out.



FOR some persons marriage is an attempt to wade a stream that has no bottom. For others it is a high dive into a pool that contains no water.

*The grim background of a savage tropical island.
The primitive blood-lust of the natives—
The even more unspeakable impulses of a rum-sodden sailor. . . .
Against these forces—a girl's brilliant wit and resources,
And the courage of a man. . . . What happens makes*

The RECALL

The most gripping tale yet produced by

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HEAVY, like a fantastic quilt, westerly rain-clouds gathered so close to the horizon that the setting sun was about to fall behind them. This meant a briefer twilight and a gathering of the dusk more swift than even the usual abrupt fall of darkness in the tropics. Perhaps, if no wind came, the clouds would spread no farther and a little later there would be moonlight. Henderson hoped for this much luck.

He was tired. The attempt to save himself and the girl seemed futile. A last hope that Captain Stark might put in that day had now vanished. But although Henderson had begun to realize the futility of his efforts he did not permit himself the slightest thought of surrender. Surrender—to what? The quality of mercy was unknown to these black men of Charbar. He grunted savagely as he evoked the inevitable end of himself and his companion. It might come anytime now. With the darkness. He cursed the blanket of clouds that had gathered in the west. If the moon came out they might see through still another night.

A bit carelessly he peered out the window. His rifle was standing with the stock on the board floor and the muzzle tipped against the window ledge. Naturally no one was visible in the cleared space in front of the station. To the left the jungle fringe was impenetrable. There was little likelihood

of an attack now, while the light held. It would probably be safe to abandon his post for a few minutes and go back to speak to the girl in the rear room.

But for a few moments Henderson was irresolute. He was thinking again of what seemed to him an ultimate irony that a fragment of the white man's civilization should have come to him miraculously at Charbar, over the reefs from the open sea. After six years of life with the natives he had deemed his escape complete.

Of course, once every eight or ten months, Captain Stark put in with the *Tarfia* to load the stuff gathered by Henderson and his black men during a period of shell fishing. But Captain Stark, sailing with his native crew up the sinister rivers of the mainland and among the difficult passages of the islands, was as little a creature of civilization as Henderson himself. Indeed, this constituted a bond of wordless sympathy between the two men. Both had left the cities and towns and people of their own race behind them—Henderson because his past experiences had embittered him, and Stark through obscure choice. . . .

THE story of the *Phoenix*' wreck had been related to Henderson both by the girl and that brutal white sailorman, Davenport. But the white master of Charbar saw in it more than a simple

tragedy of the sea. It seemed to him purposeful, a malignancy of fortune directed at himself. He tried, hostilely, to suppress his growing feelings toward Miss Comins. Why were these two, the girl who had been a passenger on the *Phoenix*, and the white brute her companion been saved from all the others? What but a purposeful fate had guided their open boat through the channels of the reefs to Henderson's jetty at Charbar?

After all, the questions were unanswerable, and recalling his purpose, Henderson walked across the bare boards of the office and down the narrow corridor, oppressive with heat, toward the back room. As he expected, tired as she must be, he saw that Julia Comins was still at her post near the window. But her white, relaxed hands looked curiously ineffectual as the finger tips rested against the grim barrel of the rifle.

She glanced up questioningly at Henderson.

"We have still a few moments to breathe," he said. "They'll certainly try nothing until the dark."

The girl arose. Her eyes traveled wearily toward the window.

"A little while ago," she said, "I'm sure Davenport showed himself for an instant at the edge of the jungle."

Henderson frowned. The girl anticipated his thought, for hastily she put in:

"I couldn't! I think if I saw him running toward me, and I knew I must to save myself, I could shoot. But to fire deliberately, when he chances to show himself—"

Her voice trailed off and her shoulders moved with a slight shudder. For a little while both were silent.

"You're tired!" said Henderson, at last.

She nodded slowly. The man waited and then his companion said:

"Of course I'm tired. But that doesn't mean I'll give up. I—can't!"

Henderson nodded.

"I didn't imagine you were thinking of giving up," he muttered.

He tried to conceal the surge of admiration that sought expression in his voice. She was as brave as himself, quite as determined, and in spite of her frailty, no less hardy it seemed. A fresh frown cut deep lines in his forehead. It was a rotten business that Davenport had turned the natives against him, that he and the girl were standing this siege with no more prospect of success than the almost vain hope that Captain Stark would appear in time. But to Henderson it was almost as bad that a renewed spell had been cast upon him from the abandoned magic of other days, that he had been made to feel once more, here in Charbar, the seeming place of complete escape, the poignant charm and beauty of a woman of his own race. Had he run away from one bitter disappointment to discover yet another? Was there no way to see Julia Comins coldly, to disregard the subtle provocation in her glinting, yellow hair, her eyes at once as clear and mysterious as his tropic skies, her slim, girlish body that concealed a staunch heart?

It was the truth: now Henderson had come to fear his companion far more than the spears of the natives or Davenport's crude devilment. It seemed to him that no matter how this affair turned, whether or not Stark came in time to save him, he would remain utterly lost. After six years of isolation at Charbar he had, it seemed, mastered life. And now life, in this girl, had returned once more to claim him.

Another sort of man might have accepted the recall gladly. But not Henderson. Other men, less sensitive, had never suffered Henderson's romantic defeat in early youth. Other men had not his curious capacity for mistrust. . . . He heard the girl speaking.

She had returned to an old perplexity. During the three days of the siege, in the moments they had snatched to speak together, the same question had been discussed.

"I can't understand," she said, "how such a man as Davenport could have gotten control of those black men so

quickly. One would think they would never listen to him. They know you. You've lived with them all these years. How long has it been?"

"Six years now."

"Six years. You've told me that they worked with you well enough. You never had trouble before. How could that brute bring all this about in a few weeks?"

"Miss Comins," said Henderson, "you don't understand the character of the black men of Charbar—black natives anywhere. No matter how friendly they may seem—I've worked shoulder to shoulder with dozens of those fellows hiding there in that jungle hoping to stick a spear in me now—the white man is never their brother. They hold him in an instinct of distrust. A few adroit words and they're ready to turn against him. It must have been easy for our friend Davenport. He's been knocking around as a seaman in trading vessels in this part of the world for years—that gave him the same advantage of speaking their lingo that I have myself. Then—he was ready to go farther than me."

Julia Comins gave the man a swift, questioning glance.

"I didn't tell you," he said slowly, "what I saw when I slipped out to reconnoiter last night. . . ."

She shook her head.

"I was so happy," she murmured with great simplicity, "to see you come back alive that I hadn't the thought to question you."

Henderson felt his heart stir. She was happy to see him come back alive! For his sake? Because she felt for him—his will snapped this strand of seductive thought.

"When I crawled safely through the high grass in the compound," he said, "I went a little faster through the bush. I wasn't particularly concerned for myself there. I know as much about getting through the bush as the natives. It wasn't much of a job to locate them. In a few minutes I could see their rosin torches flaring through the trees. . . ."

He made a slight, harsh gesture of repugnance.

"I'd had a glimpse of the sort of thing that was going on before. Couldn't escape seeing some of it in six years of life here. But naturally the black devils never got me into it."

"They were squatting on mats around the fire drinking kava. Yes, there was Davenport, down on his haunches beside Pico-Pico. Pico-Pico! He was one time my friend. . . . But a white man doesn't have friends with the savages. Then the girls came out and began to dance. It was a slow shuffle at first. The men started that sort of guttural grunting. Davenport was one of them. He has a black enough heart—it doesn't matter about the hue of his skin. In a little while he was on his feet with the rest of those naked knaves. Near the fire I saw they had something trussed up—I thought I had seen it moving. I made out after a bit that it was an animal with the legs broken, but still alive. They have that pretty custom of preparing their sacrifices. I saw old Pico-Pico—they were howling like a million demons now—throw the beast into the flames. A second later he was pulled out, still alive I suppose, and they rent him limb from limb. . . ."

He hesitated.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

"I saw Pico-Pico leaping around with a gory fragment in his black paws. Our friend Davenport was cavorting with the same gruesome antic. The women were scratching a hole in the damp humus under the trees with their bare hands. Into this the men—Davenport also—dropped dripping pieces of the sacrifice. They were chanting. Black magic, Miss Comins! They were asking their infernal gods to give them the victory over us!"

SHE was sitting again in a weary attitude in the chair near the window. The dusk was falling swiftly. The swarthy fronds of the palms began to blend with an impenetrable sky.

"Will they come tonight?" she asked.

Henderson knew that this was no hour for evasion.

"I think," he answered, "that after last night's ceremonial they're pretty certain to come. If we have the moon we may be able to keep them off—for a while."

"For a while?"

"I don't know how long. They are plentiful. Not any too cunning, of course—but they have numbers."

The girl had abruptly arisen. She came toward Henderson in the darkening room and vividly he could feel the touch of her slim fingers on his sleeve.

"George," she began.

He inspired a swift breath. For the first time during these difficult days she had used his familiar name.

"—Isn't there some other way?" she continued. "You haven't lost all your old sway over them, have you? I'm not blind. I know what will happen to-night. We'll keep them off a few minutes when they attack and then—"

Henderson shrugged his shoulders.

"There are two things Davenport wants," the girl went on. "First, he wants to get at your whiskey stores again, and then—he wants me!"

"By God!" exclaimed Henderson. (The words were wrung brutally from scarcely parted lips.) "He shan't have—that!"

"Perhaps," whispered Julia, "you were wrong in making him leave, George!"

"Do you really think I could have done anything else?" asked the man, a bit gruffly.

He experienced the strangely stirring pressure of her fingers again clasped about his arm.

"No," she answered quietly. "You were right after all. It would not have been you to do anything less."

II

A SILENCE fell. Vividly Henderson was reviewing the events of the recent past. His mind went swiftly to the beginning, seven weeks ago, when his natives came running to tell him that

an open boat had drifted in from the sea. Utterly incredulous, he had hastened down to the jetty and found the girl crawling out of the boat. She was on the verge of collapse; Davenport, her companion, was really insensible. He had been practically so during the whole dreadful adventure, two days and two nights at sea, under the tropic sun by day. When the *Phoenix* went down a bit of wreckage had struck him and he had been just able to pull himself into the boat with the girl. At times, while they drifted about, she thought him dead. Then he would stir or moan. . . . The natives had helped Henderson bring this pair up to the station.

Curiously enough, once on land, Davenport had been the first to recover. The following day, while the girl was still in bed, he had been able to come out on the verandah and sit in the sun. Wearing a great, crude bandage about his head he sat there with Henderson, but neither said very much. Sourly the white master of Charbar was wondering what might happen before Captain Stark arrived in the *Tarfia* to take these strangers away from the island. Even at that early moment he had, while looking at Davenport's seamy face, a premonition of evil. And the presence of the girl, recovering indoors, disturbed him likewise. An hour before, taking fresh water in to her, he had been moved by her frail helplessness as she lay on his bed. He had not welcomed this emotion. It was something out of the past, softness, a tenderness, that he had resolutely put behind him.

Davenport spoke and asked whether Henderson had any whiskey. He needed something, he growled, to "straighten up his guts." Henderson, going indoors, had brought out a bottle from his stores.

THAT was the beginning. The sailor-man was drunk that night and Henderson was surprised to see that he had become friendly with the natives. It seemed that their dialect was not much different from some other smatterings

of black speech known to Davenport. He was drunk that night and, more or less, he remained drunk during the ensuing weeks.

Several times Henderson considered the advisability of forbidding Davenport any further access to the liquor. But Henderson had not wished to precipitate trouble. Davenport seemed safer drunk than sober. He spent much of his time down in the native village. His host was unconcerned with the sailorman's preference for native company. Indeed, he rather rejoiced in it. It kept Davenport away from the station. And it kept his eyes off the girl, off Julia Comins.

More than once, at meals or seated on the verandah, Henderson had detected the sailor with his eyes fastened upon the girl's face. He gazed at her steadily, doggishly, and with a vivid brutality. It was difficult for Henderson to remain inactive at such moments. Nevertheless, he cautioned himself to discretion. He said or did nothing.

The end had come one afternoon five days ago. Henderson had been standing in the compound when he heard a scream from the front room of the house. He turned and ran toward the building. As he dashed through the door he saw Davenport pulling Julia into his arms like a great, maddened bear. She buffeted his broad face with her ineffectual fists, and he shook off the blows indifferently. Henderson grasped him by the collar of his tattered shirt and whirled him about. A hot, whiskey-laden breath was gasped into Henderson's face. Then, infuriated with this brute, he struck.

The sailor went down in the corner between Henderson's desk and the wall. The light partition vibrated like a stretched membrane with the impact of his heavy body. Catlike, Henderson was on him again and jerked him to his feet.

"You black dog!" he cried. "No more rum-guzzling and no more stinking tricks in this place! You're fond of your brothers in the bush, aren't you? And by God! you're going out

now to live with them! You're going to stay back there in the jungle until Stark comes and takes you away from Charbar. If I see your dirty face again, before that, I'll pump you full of lead!"

THE event that Henderson had not foreseen, in ordering Davenport to the jungle, was the ascendancy the sailor would secure, within a few days, over the blacks. Strange he hadn't been able to prevision that! He understood well enough the credulity of the blacks. He could easily guess the sort of persuasion used by Davenport to stir up this murderous attack upon the station. Davenport had been cunning enough to work upon the native superstitions. He had spoken to them, doubtless, of the white man's inimical magic. He had pointed to himself as the first victim. He had persuaded them that after six years of peace Henderson, the white man, with the white witch-girl, was about to show his heretofore inscrutable hand. He had drunk kava with them, and made sacrifice to their demons.

Now, in the dark room that was peopled not only by himself and the girl, but by sinister shadows, Henderson heard her voice once more.

"If there were some other way," she murmured. "How can we risk their attack? They have numbers, you say. Yes. Surely that means the end for us."

There followed another silence. It was the man who broke it.

"I think I'd better go front again," he said. "I believe the moon is coming up! A better chance for us! If you see any movement from this end, call me!"

Slowly he retraced his steps through the overheated hallways. The air was so oppressive he was obliged to gulp it like one athirst. He entered the office once more and took his place near the window. Yes, the moon was rising, the storm had gone down behind the hills in the west, and it was to be a clear night.

Henderson began to meditate both upon the courage and beauty of his

companion. Ah, try to stifle that recognition as much as he could, his thoughts returned again and again to the potent reality of her loveliness! Why couldn't he, after the assuaging passage of so many years, put the hurt of his early disappointment out of his spirit, lave himself clean of it? He had been, in those early impressionable days of romantic disaster—hardly more than a boy. He had perhaps no more than an hour or two now to accept life once more. Why not go back to the girl, alone in the darkness of her room, and tell her what he was trying to stifle in his heart?

But Henderson remained near the window, watching the fringe of the jungle into which the moon cast its ineffectual beams. Beyond, the palm fronds caught at the moonlight and dangled like glimmering swords. There seemed to be a stir in the bush. Henderson grasped his rifle.

He heard steps in the hallway. He recognized Julia's tread and expected her to enter the office. What had happened to bring her to his side? But he did not turn his head, so intently did he watch the bush. It was with amazement that he heard her footfalls pass his door, and the outer door of the house softly open. The rifle clattered on the bare boards of the room. Henderson stood tensely, waiting.

A second later she had crossed the verandah and, within sight from the window, was standing exposed amid the tall grass of the compound. A bit of white stuff, a handkerchief, perhaps, was fluttering in her hand.

III

THE man was too amazed for action. He stood in statuesque immobility at the window. The frail moonlight bathed the girl and the handkerchief moved wanly from the tips of her fingers.

Several moments passed before there was any stir in the bush. Then swarthy figures emerged and were revealed in the feeble light. They were black men,

carrying uplifted spears. Henderson realized that if he were to cry out now they would certainly kill the girl. He bit his lips, he clenched his fists until the nails bit into the palms of his hands; he could not understand.

The girl, after an instant of hesitation, advanced to meet the motionless blacks. When she was very near them Henderson saw Davenport step out of concealment.

The sailorman and the girl advanced toward each other. They began to speak, but Henderson could hear only the faint murmuring of their voices and none of the separate words. They talked at length; Davenport made brusque, brutal gestures with his hands. Then, companioned by half a dozen of the black men, he walked with Julia toward the house!

Henderson waited, uncomprehending, with the rigidity of one shocked out of all motion. His mind was blank before an enigma too deep for solution. His eyes turned to the door as he heard the patter of black feet on the verandah and then the tread of the girl and the harsh clumping of the sailor.

In the dusk he could see that the blacks were coming into the office. Behind them were the white man and girl.

"There!" he heard the girl exclaim in a hissing whisper.

Before Henderson could recover the least of his lost power of motion a dozen black hands were clinging to his arms. . . .

He heard Davenport laughing.

They trussed him like the sacrificial animal of the previous night. His hands were tied with fibre thongs and the fibres were passed tightly about his ankles. For a second he swayed near the window—and found Davenport's heavy, grinning face thrust close to his own. Then the sailor's fist was raised and Henderson, flung backward by the blow, fell violently on his side. He lay in the corner, waiting.

For the first time in three nights a match was struck. It was the girl who had lighted it, and she touched the flicker of yellow flame to the lamp. A glow

filled the room. The natives were standing near the farther wall, clasping their spears again.

Mutely, Henderson turned his eyes to the girl's face. What was he to believe? A dull flush suffused his cheeks. She was a woman! A woman. . . . Faithless! But incredibly, abominably faithless. . . .

In the yellow glow of the lamp her face, for a moment, seemed blanched of all color. Then, as she turned to the sailor, a flush tintured her white cheeks.

"Wait!" she cried.

She ran out of the room, but a moment later she was back with a bottle. With a brutal grunt, Davenport seized it from her hands. He drew out the cork with his teeth. There were convulsive movements in his bare throat as he swallowed in noisy gulps.

"Ah!" he muttered, and wiped his dripping lips with the back of his hand.

He turned and stared at Henderson. A slow grin curved on his thick lips.

"I think we'll do for him now!" he muttered.

The girl was shaking her head.

"No," she whispered. "Let him look on a while. Do him good!"

Davenport for a moment was irresolute. Then, tipping up the bottle, he drew upon it once more. A shudder passed over his shoulders.

"Five damn days without a drop to drink!" he cried hoarsely. "Five damn days and damn nights."

"He wouldn't give me any either," said the girl.

Davenport stared at her an instant.

"The bloody miser!" he exclaimed. "Here!"

Henderson stared incredulously as the girl took the bottle out of his knobby fingers. An abiding bitterness pervaded his heart so that it seemed to pulse under a constriction, painfully. He had been tricked beyond reason; he felt himself giddy with a mad incredulity. Julia Comins was drinking.

The sailorman was laughing. He swallowed for the third time in convulsive gulps. Then he stared at the girl.

"I wasn't quite on to you, kid!" he muttered. "So help me God, I thought you had cottoned to that poor bloke. He wouldn't let you get away, is that it? You didn't have no chance before, eh? We'll finish him!"

He passed a heavy, uncertain hand before his eyes. The immoderate swallows of raw spirit, taken in this oppressive room, had begun to daze him. He stumbled toward a chair. The girl stood at his side. After just a perceptible hesitation she put her hand on his shoulder, tossing her head toward the silent company of black men.

"Tell them to go out," she whispered.

"How's that?"

"Tell them to go out," she repeated.

"I'd rather we'd be alone. . . ."

Davenport stared dully for a moment, and then seemed to comprehend the innuendo of her words. His face was slashed with a trembling leer. For an instant his eyes drank in the girl's image avidly, while he slowly nodded his head. Then, hunching his shoulders, he spoke to the natives.

For a few seconds it seemed improbable to Henderson, as he lay on the floor, that the sailorman could persuade them. They shifted their spears uneasily and argued that it would be well to do away with the other white man and the white witch-girl immediately. Ah! the white witch-girl! Davenport's eyes gleamed with diabolic fires. There was danger to them all, he said. Already he had detected her making a strong magic! The nude shoulders of the black men shivered. But he was white, he wasn't afraid of her magic. They must let him deal with her. They must be near, but out of reach of her spell.

Under this subtle persuasion they forgot their pleasant thoughts of immediate murder and pillage and appeared happy enough to escape to the compound. There, just outside the verandah, they squatted, waiting. The two white men and Julia Comins were alone in the house.

The girl again brought the bottle to Davenport and pressed it into his hands.

Once more he raised it to his lips, gulping.

"Well," he said, "the damned niggers are gone. . . ."

She nodded quickly.

"Give me the bottle!" she cried.

For the second time Henderson saw her touch it to her lips. She returned it to the sailor's hands. He was swaying unsteadily on the chair. He seemed to hesitate.

"There's not much left," she said. "Finish it. I'll get another!"

He swallowed what remained; the empty flask dropped from his hands and clattered on the floor. Leering again, he stood up. He was advancing toward the girl. Henderson's wrists swelled against the inexorable cords. Julia Comins stood rigid, her back to the wall, her arms spread out. The sailor put out a pair of groping hands. Then, sodden, overcome, he fell. He rolled over on his face and began to breath noisily.

Henderson saw the flash of the girl's white dress as she ran across the room. She was kneeling at his side. From his desk she had snatched his clasp-knife; the blade was open. He felt the thongs snap at his wrists, then at the ankles. She was pulling him up by the hands.

"Hurry!" she whispered urgently. "Get up! Help me to tie him!"

Henderson arose unsteadily to his feet. There was a fog before his mind, but into it was blowing, almost imperceptibly, a breath of awakening understanding.

"He can't move now," Julia was whispering. "He's helpless. What a sodden fool! Ah, I knew there was some other way—and I found it! I found it, George! It was so easy to trick the brutes! He's our prisoner now. You must frighten those black men in the compound. They'll be frightened enough when they realize we have Davenport, won't they? They'll believe it was my magic, won't they? Surely they won't come back tonight! We're safe for a little while!"

All the incredulities, all the obscure doubts that for an hour had tormented, haunted Henderson's mind, were gone

in this instant. He understood. He comprehended the flaming courage of his companion. He knew that she had done, incredibly, the one thing possible to save herself and him. How desperately she had staked their fortunes on a single chance! . . . On the floor Davenport was still breathing heavily.

Swiftly Henderson was bending over him, securing his hands and feet. He picked up his rifle and approached the window. A sharp report reverberated in the close, overheated room. There was a cry in the compound and a swish of running feet in the tall grass.

"Shot over their heads," grunted Henderson. "They're terrified enough now. You've probably guessed their minds about right. They won't know just what to think. For the rest of tonight anyway they won't dare to do more than watch out there at the jungle's edge."

He turned from the window. He was facing Julia.

"You came to me," he heard himself saying, "miraculously from the sea. I understand now why you were saved—from all the others. I know why I've been waiting here at Charbar for years. I—"

His voice faltered. He wanted to tell her all that was in his heart. He desired that she should know how completely she had healed the old, romantic hurt of his spirit. He wanted to say how fully she had recalled him to life, and to an ineffable illusion of romance that he had deemed trodden underfoot with the memories of other days.

But her nearness, the glow in her wide eyes, and the shimmer of yellow light on her golden hair took the words from his lips, made them needless. His need was beyond words then, the need of this beloved girl close in his arms.

He drew her toward him and their lips joined. . . .

IV

In the morning they were seated in the cabin of the *Tarfia*, at breakfast with Captain Stark. The cutter had

come in at dawn, and when her hoarse whistle had sounded beyond the reefs the white man and girl knew that their peril was over.

"No," said Henderson, shaking his head to a question of the Captain's. "I shan't return to Charbar, Captain. Not now. I've been—brought back!"

"Brought back," repeated Stark. "What do you mean?"

Henderson glanced quickly at the face of the girl, who returned a swift smile. He made a soothing movement with his hands.

"Stark, old fellow," he murmured, "you wouldn't understand if I told

you. So we'll let it rest at that."

He paused.

"Are you sure," he asked presently, "that you've got that brute Davenport stowed away safely enough? If he should happen to get free among your native crew—"

The captain interrupted this cautionary word with a brief laugh.

"You leave that to me," he said, nodding his head. "When we get to Mamenta he'll be turned over fast enough to the Dutch officials. There are two or three other little affairs they'd like to have that chap for. Yes—I know about him. A pleasant fellow!"



What Need of Words

By William A. Drake

WHAT need of words of yours, dear one?
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And all that love can ever say
Your eyes have said to me.

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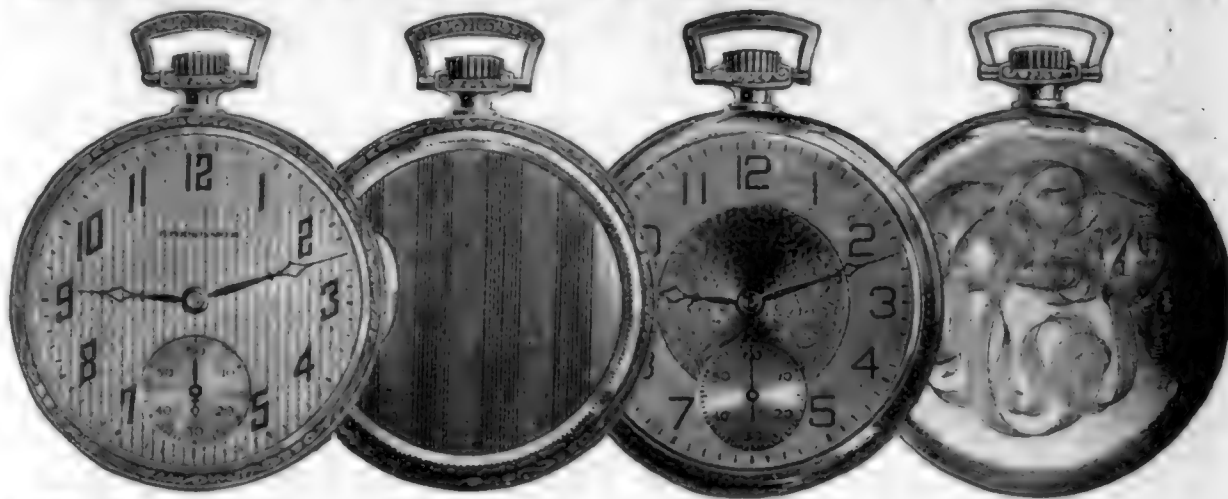
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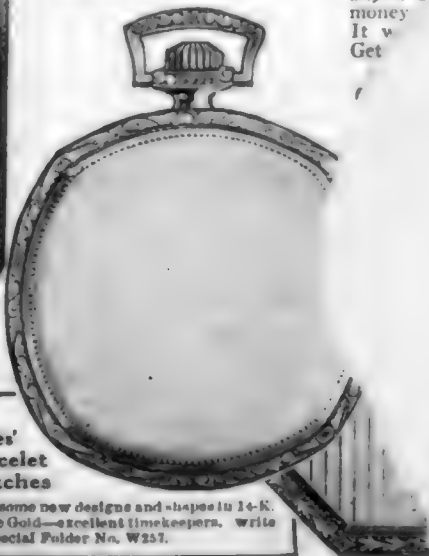
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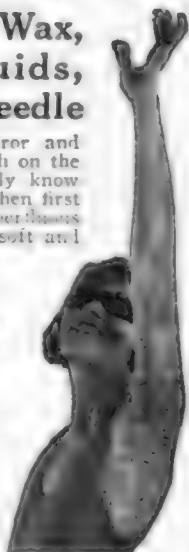
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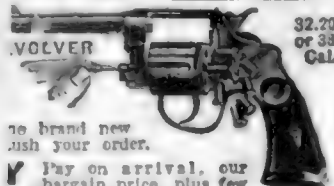
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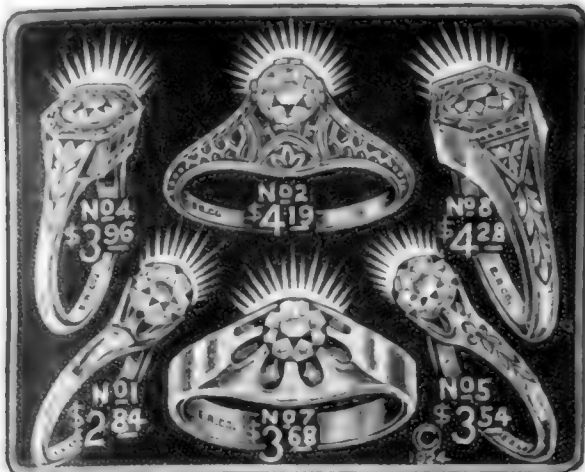
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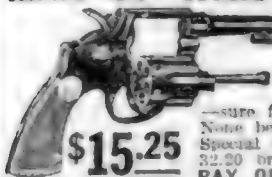
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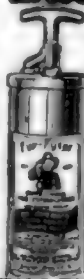
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Album



A Slap in the Face with a Cream Puff

is not a man's way of fighting. Neither can you do a man's job with balls of mush on your arms where muscle ought to be. How long are you going to drag along this way? Don't try to kid yourself by saying: "Oh, I'll start regular exercise next week." I know a lot of fellows who kept doing that until—*Zowie*—it was too late. They couldn't make a come-back no matter how they tried.

THIS IS A BIG DAY FOR YOU

Don't put this off another second. If you want to make the best of your life, you'll have to start right now. Come on, let's go—you and me—and you're going to bless the day you read this message. I'm going to make you work—you can let your old shirt on that. But you'll thank me for it, 'cause—oh, boy!—what a different looking chap you're going to be. Just for a starter I'm going to put one full inch on those arms of yours in exactly 30 days—and two inches on your chest in the same length of time. But that's nothing. Then comes the real works. I'm going to build out that neck of yours and put a pair of shoulders on you that will bulge right out of your old coat sleeves. I'm going to fill out your chest with a perfect pair of lungs that will pump real oxygen into your blood, shooting a thrill over your entire body and sending a quiver up your old spinal column. I'm going to put a ripple of muscle up and down your stomach instead of that roll of fat that is now hanging over your belt line. And while I'm doing this, I am also going to build muscle in and around every vital organ. You will have a spring to your step and a flash to your eye. In fact, you will say to yourself: "What a terrible oil-can I was turning out to be; why didn't I start this long ago?"

LET'S GO

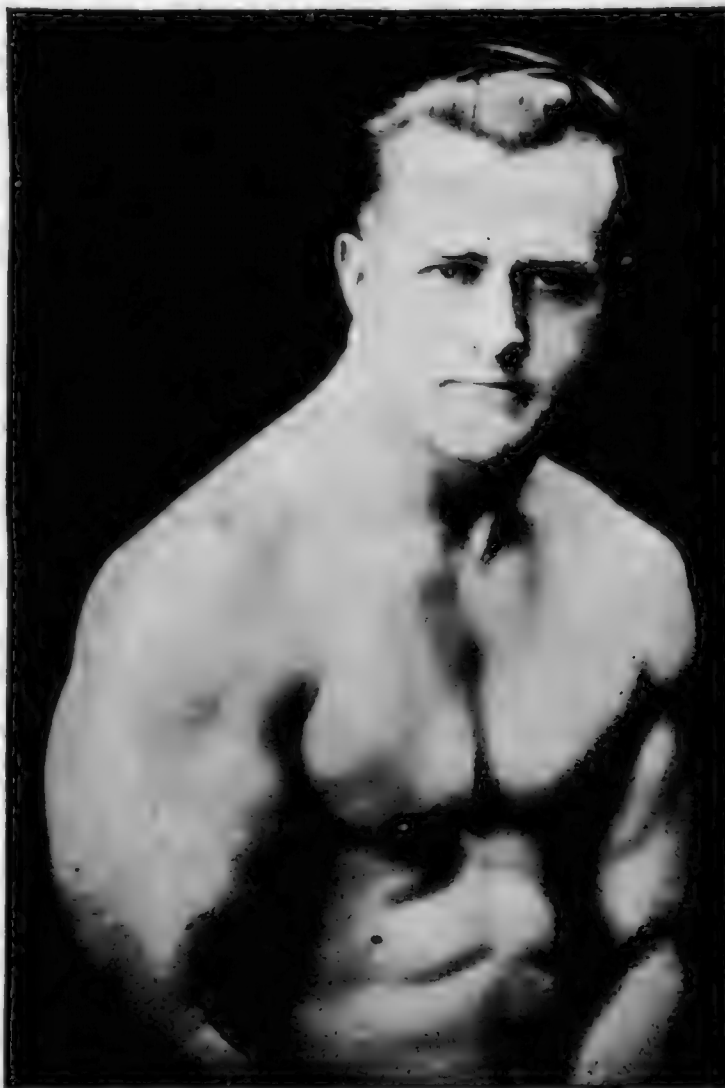
Why waste time over these things. You want *muscle*. You want *strength*. You want *life*. What you want, I can give you—it's yours for the asking. I don't try to kid you on with a lot of idle promises. I *guarantee* these things. You don't take any chance with me. Come on now and get on the job. Be the man you have always wanted to be.

Send for My New 64-page Book **"MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT"** IT IS FREE

It contains forty-three full-page photographs of myself and some of the many prize-winning pupils I have trained. Some of these came to me as pitiful weaklings, imploring me to help them. Look them over now and you will marvel at their present physiques. This book will prove an impetus and a real inspiration to you. It will thrill you through and through. All I ask is 10 cents to cover the cost of wrapping and mailing and it is yours to keep. This will not obligate you at all, but for the sake of your future health and happiness, do not put it off. Send today—right now before you turn this page.

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Street

City..... State.....

Catarrh, Etc.

Your blood, containing fruit acid, is the only substance that can dissolve any mucus or "paste" in your system.

Mucus-Making Foods

In its passage through the body mucus is secreted in various organs, causing disease. The effects or symptoms are then named variously according to location, but the source of the trouble is the same—fermentation, chiefly from butter, cheese, cream, fat, oil, salt, etc., when used beyond your capacity, or in wrong combinations.

100 Names for 1 Disease

Mucus causes catarrh of the eyes (conjunctivitis), of the nose (rhinitis), of the ears (otitis, deafness), of the bronchial tubes (bronchitis, asthma), of the lungs (tuberculosis), of the stomach (gastritis), of the appendix (appendicitis), of the bowels (colitis), etc.

Correct Eating Cures



Pure juice from grapefruits, without sugar, and pure tomato juice, berries, etc., when used as freely as water and combined with adequate quantities of brain-and-nervenourishing foods with stimulative and laxative vegetables, can prepare your blood for dissolving mucus.

Fresh fruit acids clean a stomach that is suffering from mucus or acidity. Hyperacidity, acidosis, is produced by mucus from fermenting foods, just as vinegar is made from fermenting sugar, syrups and fruits. But fresh fruit acid when correctly combined is always beneficial.

Objectionable features of catarrh are expectoration, "hawking," "running nose." In a singer or speaker, a career, a life work, is ruined by a little flocculent matter on the vocal cords producing hoarseness, forfeited engagements, missed opportunities, etc. Deafness hinders advancement in business. Noises in the head make the sufferer irritable, and irrational.

Tubercular Catarrh

A deposit of mucus in the lungs is often suppressed by medicine made from coal tar derivatives. The cough is sometimes quieted, but the mucus remains to form the seat of tuberculosis.

Why Envy the Live-Wire?

Mucus when present in large quantities prevents the nerves from assimilating their due nutriment. It is a cause of undue fatigue.

Stop using mucus-making foods and learn to take brain-and-nerve foods, etc. Build yourself into a go-getter, a live-wire, an untiring person, internally clean, who turns work into pleasure.

One pupil wrote: "No mucus, voice stronger, head clear as a bell, gained 20 pounds, and now earn four times as much."

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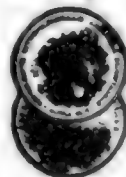
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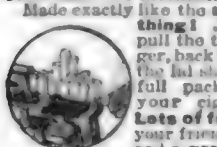
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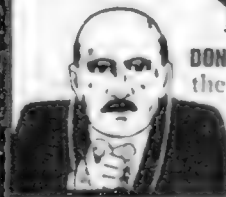
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*Use the products shown here—
and save the coupons*

Almost all of the products illustrated and listed here are household necessities—things that you use every day, they are of the finest quality, cost no more than other products of the same character and carry United Profit-Sharing Coupons. You have probably used or are using, one or more of these articles—if so, you recognize their desirability. Do you appreciate the great worth of the United Coupons that come with them?

Look through our catalog, or better still go to a United premium station and see for yourself what valuable articles you can get for these coupons. If there is no premium station in your locality, select the articles desired and send your coupons to the address given below. We prepay all shipping charges.

It is not hard to get these products—just ask for the brands that carry United Coupons—they are well-known for high quality—here is a list of them.



No. 545 "UNIVERSAL"
Electric Coffee Percolator
NICKEL-PLATED. CAPACITY
THREE PINTS. WITH SIX
FEET OF CORD, PLUG AND
SOCKET. GIVEN IN EXCHANGE
FOR 4250 COUPONS.

No. 372 "Wm. Rogers Mfg. Co.'s"
Silver-Plated Teaspoons
SET OF SIX GIVEN IN
EXCHANGE FOR 625
COUPONS.

These products carry United Profit-Sharing Coupons

Wrigley's Chewing Gum
Tootsie Lunch Rolls
Nut Tootsie Rolls
Thos. J. Webb's Teas and
Coffees, Spices, Extracts
and Baking Powder
Truth Brand Extracts
Tru-lax
Kewpie Bathroom Tissue
Rainbow Candy Wafers
Votan Teas and Coffees
Luzianne Coffee

Pantex Pancake Flour
Pat-a-cake Prepared Cake
Flour
Bull-frog Self rising Flour
Beech-nut Clothes Pins
Beech-nut Tooth Picks
Danish Pride Evaporated Milk
Danish Pride Condensed Milk
Pilsner Brand Malt Syrup
Barker's Animal and Poultry
Remedies
National Cup Teas and Coffees

New Hampshire Table
Syrup
Hi-brow Ginger Ale
Tootsie Raisin Rolls
Rainbow Mints
Wool Soap Flakes
Sunbrite Cleanser
Wool Soap
Maxine Elliott Soap
Classic Soap
Pride Washing Powder
Arrow Borax Soap

You may combine the United Profit-Sharing Coupons which you receive with the above products with the coupons and certificates issued by the United Cigar Stores Company and the United Happiness Candy Stores, to obtain premiums.

United Coupons have greater value today than they have ever had before—now is the time to start saving them. Send for our illustrated catalog—it costs you nothing.

UNITED PROFIT-SHARING CORPORATION

Redemption Agent

44 WEST 18TH STREET, NEW YORK

In Wisconsin and in any other state where redemption in merchandise is prohibited, coupons are redeemed in cash only.

United Profit-Sharing Corporation
Redemption Agent,
44 W. 18th St., New York City

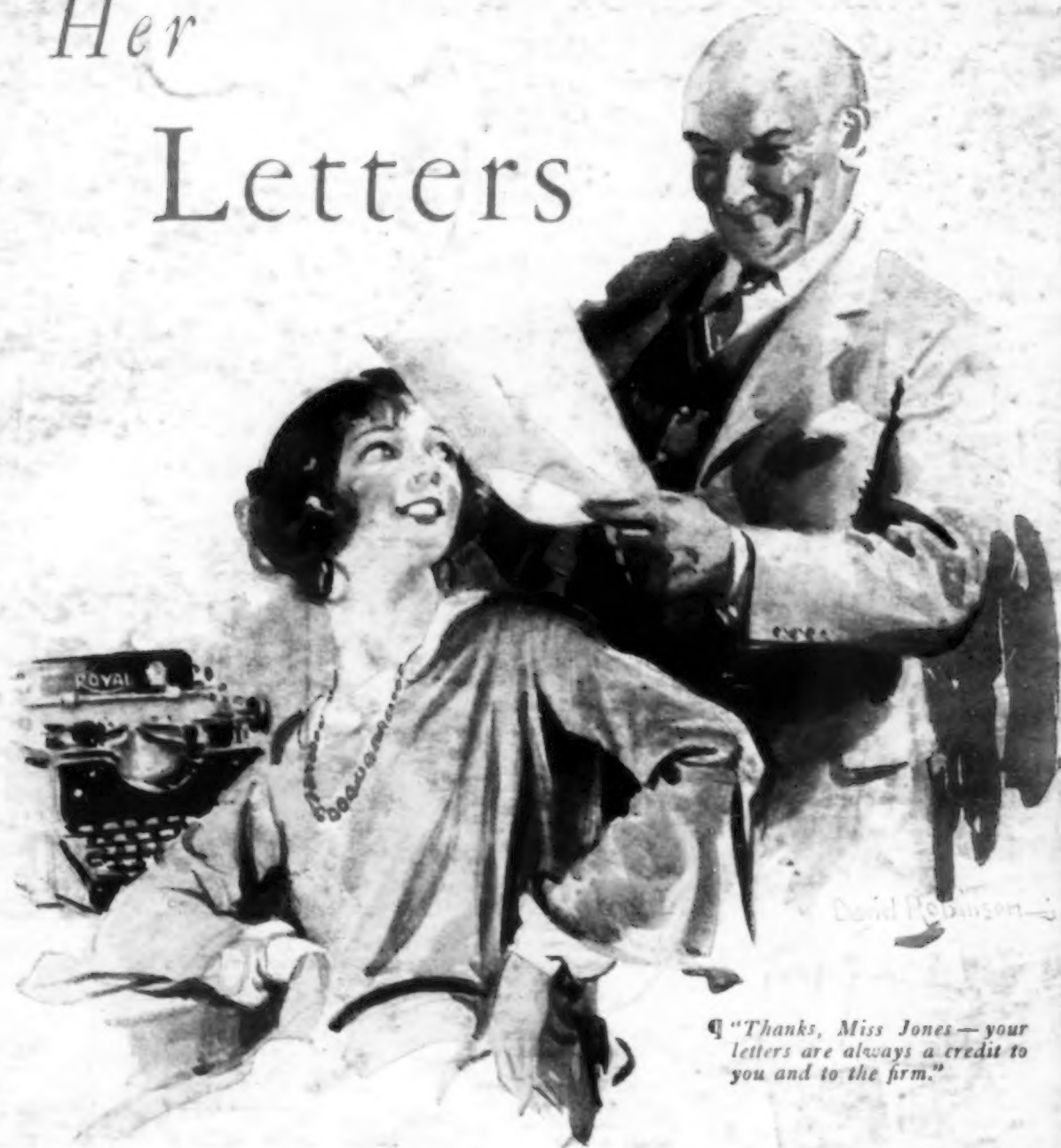
Gentlemen:
Kindly send me your free illustrated premium catalog.

Name _____

Street and No. _____

City _____ State _____

Her Letters



Q "Thanks, Miss Jones — your letters are always a credit to you and to the firm."

YOUR secretary enjoys turning out a perfectly typed letter just as much as you enjoy sending it forth as a silent representative of your organization and its works.

Her smile, as you murmur "That's fine," is one of pride and gratification. Pride, for her ability to do good work; gratification, for your provision of the proper equipment for doing good work.

A competent secretary will type a fairly presentable letter with almost any typewriter, but a Royal enables her to attain that final degree of excellence that is sought by the truly interested and loyal employee.

"That's fine" is a common expression among executives who have equipped their secretaries with Royal Typewriters. The clearcut, even impression of each letter and the perfect alignment characteristic of the Royal insure business correspondence of utmost attractiveness and dignity.

Royal Typewriter Company, Inc., 314-316 Broadway, N. Y. City. Branches and Agencies the World Over. "Compare the Work."

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